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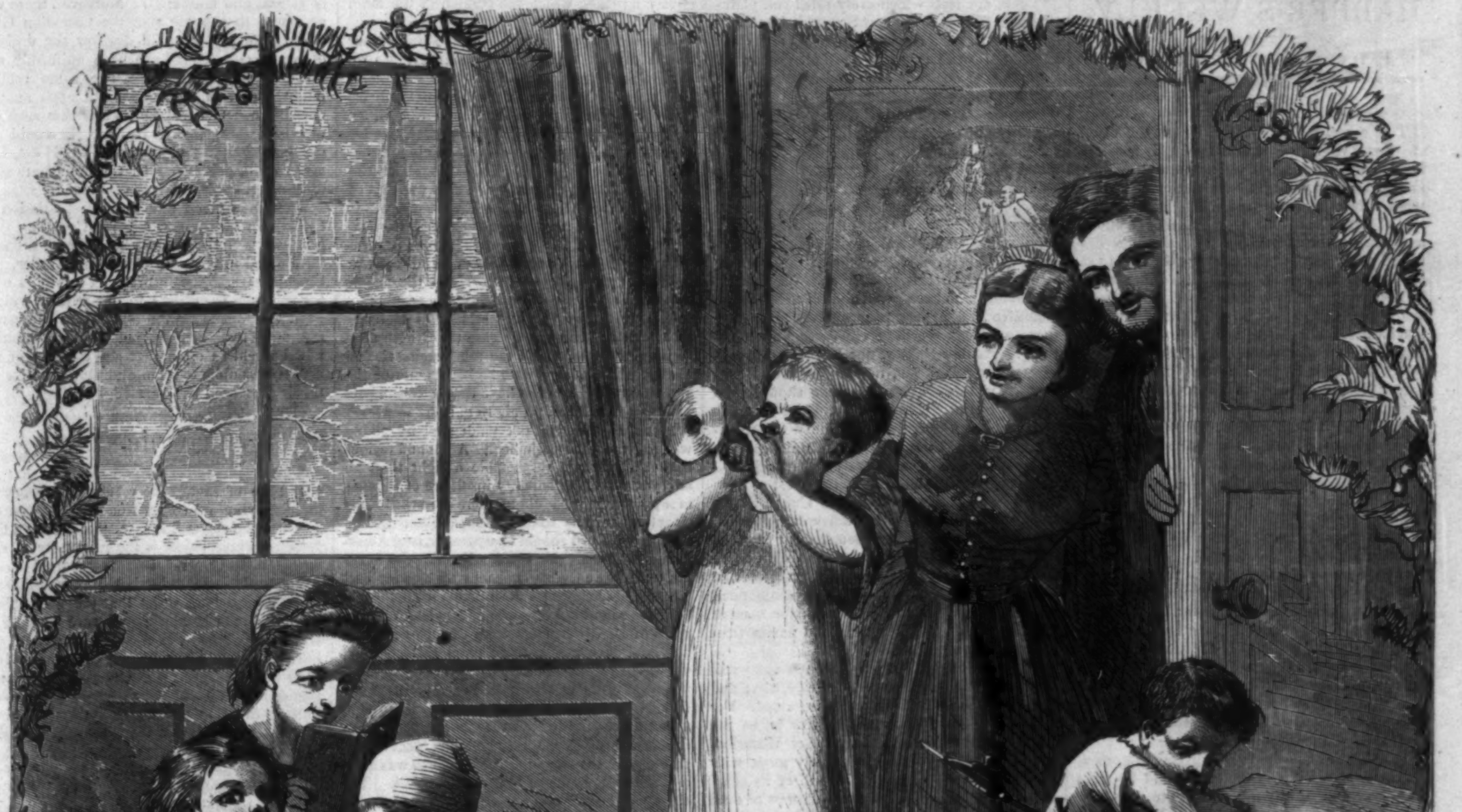

CHRISTMAS MORNING.

CHARLES DICKENS'S
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How She went on, and went over.
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HARPER'S WEEKLY.

Saturday, December 31, 1864.

CHRISTMAS.

It is a merry Christmas although the cloud of war yet rests upon the land. It is merry because the great gale of victory parts the cloud, and gives glimpses of the heaven of peace beyond. It is merry because every man feels now that the people are able to subdue the rebellion; and merriest of all because they have just declared that they will do it, and show from the Mississippi to the sea that they are doing it.

Yet now, as from the beginning of the war, the purpose of the country is only peace and good-will to all men. It has learned that a peace which is simply unquestioning submission to the meanest injustice is only more fearful war. Neither baseness nor cowardice are peace, except as death is. War is sorrowful, but there is one thing infinitely more horrible than the worst horrors of war, and that is the feeling that nothing is worth fighting for, and the blindness which can not see that war is often the safest, surest, shortest, and least bloody way of peace.

More truly than ever before the legend of this country is good-will to all men. If it will hold fast to it peace is forever secure. The strongest and most unfailing force in the world is an idea. The most visionary and impracticable of men is he who sneers at ideas. If this famously practical people had hitherto believed in principles it would have had no civil war. If it will only cleave hereafter to the principles it now acknowledges it will never have war again. It is bullies and bad men who are always fighting. It is the just men who are at peace.

To-day, then, under the Christmas evergreen, the country asks only for peace, and breathes only good-will to all men. Despite the sharp war, its bountiful feast is spread. It stands, as Mr. Nast represents in the large picture in to-day's Number, holding the door open to welcome the rebellious children back to the family banquet. It does not forget one of their crimes. It remembers the enormity of their attempt. It will take good care that the root of bitterness is destroyed forever, and that the peace of the household shall be henceforth secure. But it asks what it can command. It invites where it can enforce. It says now, as it has said from the beginning, "Submit to the laws made by all for the common welfare, and there will be no more war."

Nor does that country for a moment forget the sad and solitary hearts and hearths upon which the light of the holy season shines. It is a grief too deep for anger, and it requires that such sorrow as this Christmas sun beholds shall be made impossible hereafter. They rest from their labors, the young and brave who have made this country better worth living in. The hearts that are broken with those completed lives time will soothe, but can never wholly heal. Yet never did seed sown more surely grow and flower and crown the happy harvest-home than those precious lives. In a deeper national faith, in a purer national purpose, in soberer, simpler, nobler individual lives the harvest of that heroism shall be seen.

"Come home—come home, then," says the mother. "While you refuse you shall be scourged with fire. I have no anger. Your crime grew because I suffered it to grow. I have no anger, for in the heart's-blood of my darlings my sin is washed away. I ask for peace, I breathe only good-will. But Peace you have learned that I mean to have!"

GENERAL THOMAS.

The indomitable soldier who saved the day for us at Chickamauga after the commanding General supposed it to be lost, has won another and decisive victory before Nashville; and the name of Thomas is henceforth as popularly precious as that of Grant, of Sherman, and of Sheridan. His management of the Tennessee campaign has been masterly even to eyes that are not military. Sherman confided to him that part of the country. Hood's victory would have been Sherman's humiliation as well as Thomas's defeat; but Sherman knew his man, and Thomas knew his men, and simultaneously with Sherman's arrival upon the coast Hood is driven back, baffled and routed and disgraced.

Poor General Hood went upon a fool's errand, and Jefferson Davis sent him. Nor is it possible that the great disaster which uniformly follows Jefferson Davis's visits and advice in the Southwest can fail to injure his prestige among faithful rebels. Except for him Sherman might now have been at Atlanta and Hood watching him there. But the wit of charlatans is the opportunity of wise men. Davis must needs rush frantically into Georgia; order Hood to the rear of the Yankees; announce to the Georgians that Sherman's retreat was to be more terrible than that of Napoleon from Russia; utter at Macon, Augusta, and Columbia a few hysterical sneers and cries, hasten home to Richmond to watch the game—and presto! in two months Hood is routed, and Sherman has victoriously traversed Georgia to the sea.

These are facts which every rebel can plainly mark. They can see how Sherman has handled Davis, as the elephant disposes of the bull in the Saragossa arena. The bull dashes in; the elephant gazes at him, and as the furious animal plunges toward him, with one blow of the elephant's trunk he is thrown to the ground, and with one pressure of his foot he is trampled to death. Davis, with every other rebel, has found his master.

And while the air rings with victory it is impossible not to contrast the present command of our armies with that of previous years. Against the Union armies, with Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, and Thomas at their heads, what have the rebels to show? After Lee at Richmond, who has proved himself to be a good defensive and a very poor aggressive soldier, there are some partisan chiefs, and then nothing. Neither Bragg, nor Hood, nor Beauregard, nor Hardee, nor Early, nor Longstreet, nor Joe Johnston have shown great military genius. They were superior to many of our minor Generals, but while we have patiently endured the winnowing of time, and are at length rewarded with truly remarkable soldiers, the rebels had evidently their best at first. And from the moment that the United States began to be relieved of its fancy and political Generals our success has been steadily increasing. The only real disaster to the Union cause during the last year was the disgraceful Red River expedition, and that was not commanded by a soldier. No man could ask for a more able leadership of our armies and navies than that they have.

And let no skeptic say that Hood's army will only withdraw and must be defeated again; and that therefore no real advantage is gained. For although Thomas may not destroy it, as the English did the French army after Waterloo, yet Hood's army deprived of fifty guns, with thousands of its men, and several of its chief officers captured, with the consciousness of total failure in its attempt, and of a tottering cause all around it, may be an army still, but it is not the same army that with foolish pride invested Nashville. It is not an army that can impede or perplex General Thomas. The year ends in national glory; let it also end in national gratitude.

THE UNITED STATES AND ENGLAND.

The speech made by Professor Goldwin Smith on the evening before his departure for England is described as sad. It is not surprising that it was so when we reflect how determined the rebel intriguers in Canada, the Canadians themselves, and a large party among ourselves, seem to be, to involve England and the United States in war, while Mr. Smith, with every thoughtful American and Englishman, knows that such an event would be a profound misfortune to civilization itself.

Certainly it should be enough to make the most exasperated enemy of England pause, to reflect that his wrath is used by rebel emissaries as a tool against his own country. The one thing that would set all the bells of Richmond ringing, that would be more than an off-set to Sherman's and Thomas's successes, that would nerve Lee's arm to strike more cheerfully and heavily at Grant, is a menacing difficulty, and chiefly a war, with England. To that end all the rebel agents in Canada are working; and if this foolish Justice Coursal could, by his release of the St. Alban raiders, occasion war, a statue of lead would justly be decreed to him by the rebel Congress, as the greatest benefactor of the rebellion.

That the governing class in England are, as a body, opposed to us is true, and the reason of the opposition is obvious. The only excuse for a monarchy is its cheapness. It is a better police or it is nothing. But if it can be shown that a nation can govern itself and suppress a fearful rebellion, and conduct a general and most exciting election in the midst of civil war with perfect tranquillity, then a republican form is demonstrated to be cheaper, easier, and better, and what can a monarchy say for itself? The objection to our system has hitherto been that it was never tried. In June, on a calm sea, your pretty yacht sails smoothly enough, has been the cry, wait until January and a tempest; they are now here, and if out of the tornado the yacht safely emerges, the critics must be dumb. The aristocratic or feudal form has sincerely disbelieved in our popular system. It could not wish it success, for success was its own destruction. Therefore, with few exceptions, the aristocracy of England has been against us, and the commercial class, which hopes one day to be aristocratic, follows in its wake. The aristocrats and the snobs are our enemies. But they are not England.

Not only Goldwin Smith says that "the main body" of the English people are not against us, but Earl Russell at Blairgowrie, more than a year ago, frankly confessed that the British Government would be neutral because the majority of the people sympathized with the Government of the United States. These are witnesses from both sides. Goldwin Smith is one of "the main body" for which he speaks. Lord Russell is one of the hostile governing class, which the opinion of the main body controls.

Now although it is true that the aristocracy directs the acts of the Government, it has regard in that direction to the popular sentiment. It stopped the rams very decidedly, not only because it was told that we should regard their departure as a virtual declaration of war, but because it knew that a war with the United States would not be popular in England. The England of a hundred years ago, which was that of the aristocracy unchecked by the people, would have long since recognized the rebel Confederacy and made war upon us. But as governments come to represent the people, directly or indirectly, they grow wiser. It is the people that pays, the people that fights, the people that suffers, and they will not blindly or foolishly rush to war. In our own case the British aristocracy, the rebels, and the rebel emissaries in Europe and Canada, would gladly embroil the two nations. But what have the American people and the English people to gain by war?

National honor is not vindicated by giving way to passion or prejudice. A hot and furious nation is no more respectable a sight than an angry man. The haughty insolence of manner in a government should no more disturb the national equanimity than the superciliousness of an English Lord should exasperate a cool American gentleman. He is a gentleman who keeps his temper, and whoever keeps his temper best protects his honor and defends his life.

If the sound public sense of England can not restrain its Government from direct or indirect acts of injury and outrage upon this country, war will, of course, follow, sooner or later. But, meanwhile, let us all carefully discriminate our friends from our enemies, nor be swift to suppose that the acts of individuals are necessarily national acts. The meeting in Liverpool to protest against the escape of the *Alabama* was quite as significant as the sailing of the vessel. The timely detention of the rams by Earl Russell was quite as important a fact as the rescue of the pirate Semmes by an English "gentleman;" and the repudiation by the Canadian authorities of the judgment of Coursal is a much weightier event than that Dogberry's release of the St. Alban robbers.

GENERAL DIX'S ORDER.

In view of the information in his possession of contemplated raids, and of the formal release of the St. Alban robbers and murderers, General Dix could hardly do less than authorize the pursuit of invaders upon our soil wherever they might flee for refuge. For the solemn judgment of a court must be held to be final until it is reversed, or until it is repudiated by the executive authority of the Government, and meanwhile the whole frontier is exposed to invasion and massacre. But when the President learned the prompt disavowal by the Canadian Government of the action of Justice Coursal, he, in turn, did well to avoid unnecessary complication by revoking the order. For if Canada means to guard her own frontier it is much better that she should do it than we.

Yet General Dix's order was not necessarily, in an offensive sense, hostile. The decision of Coursal was a simple declaration that the laws of Canada did not defend a neighboring nation from attacks proceeding from Canadian soil. That is to say, the laws of Canada, as expounded by Coursal, did not maintain her neutrality, and consequently did not protect our rights. In such cases the international custom or law is very clear and unmistakable.

Phillimore, a chief authority upon international law, says: "A rebellion or a civil commotion, it may happen, agitates a nation. While the authorities are engaged in repressing it, bands of rebels pass the frontier to shelter themselves under the protection of the conterminous state, and from thence, with restored strength and fresh appliances, renew their invasion upon the state from which they have escaped. The invaded state remonstrates. The remonstrance, whether from favor to rebels or feebleness of the executive, is unheeded, or, at least, the evil complained of remains unredressed. In this state of things the invaded state is warranted by international law in crossing the frontier and in taking the necessary means for her safety, whether these be the capture or dispersion of the rebels or the destruction of their stronghold, as the exigencies of the case may require."

Vattel also says: "If his neighbor affords a refuge to his enemies, enabling them to recruit and attack him at leisure, he must either prevent them from so doing, or else they may be sought and fought on his territories."

The release of the St. Alban raiders was, under the circumstances, properly taken as a declaration that the Canadian law can not or will not protect the neighboring nation. For if it were said that the warrant of arrest was not properly signed, the reply was why, in a case so momentous, was it not properly signed? That fact, of itself, indicated that "favor to rebels" which Phillimore cites as justification of pursuit by the aggrieved nation. Or if it were urged that perhaps the next warrant would be properly signed, and perhaps the next Judge would decide differently, the reply was that in the mean while American citizens might be robbed and murdered. Moreover, there was no reason to suppose that the Canadian Government or people would disavow the decision of Coursal. They have been uniformly and furiously hostile to us. The same robbers might depart in the same night upon another expedition. General Dix knew that such enterprises were making ready. He could not tell how soon the Government would act, if it acted at all, and it was for the immediate state of things that his order was intended.

The unexpected and entire repudiation of Coursal's decision, which the Canadian Government is understood to have made, properly terminated the necessity for such an order. If Canada says she will protect our rights upon her soil, she is entitled to our patient waiting until the fact is proved either that she can or can not. Nor can the judgment of Coursal now be held as proof that she can not or will not, since public opinion and the executive authorities refuse to acknowledge it.

ARMING THE SLAVES.

The Richmond *Enquirer* declares that the only hope of saving the rebel Confederacy lies in destroying its corner-stone. "Let us free and arm the slaves," it says, "to defend a Confederacy whose object is the perpetuity of slavery." And General Lee is reported to cry Amen! It is in vain that Jefferson Davis and his associates insist that they are fighting for their independence, and care nothing for slavery; because the world knows, and they have themselves announced, that they wished their independence for the purpose of maintaining slavery. They claim that they are essentially a different people; that their social and industrial systems are inharmonious with those of the rest of the country; that, in a word, the North and the South are incompatible. If that were so, it is but another way of saying that they cherish slavery, and the rest of the country does not. They began the rebellion to save slavery, and now they propose to abolish slavery to save the rebellion. The military force and the logic of this infamous conspiracy against civil order and human nature break down together. The pretense of independence is as hollow as the "Confederacy." The whole moral and military rebellion is a shell which is gradually crumbling in the grasp of a people faithful to liberty and law.

The practical question of arming the slaves is interesting. What would be the effect of the movement, even if the mere proposal did not cast an apple of discord into the happy family of "free, sovereign, and independent States of the Southern Confederacy?" Would it prolong the war? Would the slaves fight for the slave-drivers?

It is obvious that the large mass of slaves are so ignorant that they might easily believe their masters when told that the Yankees would sell them to Cuba. But the truth is, as told by slave-holders themselves and confirmed by universal testimony, that the slaves perfectly understand the war. Notwithstanding our doubtful policy at the opening of the struggle; despite the foolish orders of our Generals, and the painful stupidity of the twaddle that "we don't care about niggers," which might well have alienated the sympathy of the slaves—they have been patient, intelligent, and sympathetic; always our best guides, our most faithful friends, and truer to our own cause than we ourselves have been. They have never doubted, according to the most trusty testimony, any more than the laboring classes of Europe, that the cause of the Union and Government was their cause. The fear of being sold to Cuba by the Yankees will not be very terrible to them.

There is another important consideration—whether many of the slaves who are attached to their masters and the plantations on which they live will not fight for them? Undoubtedly in some instances this would be the case. But it is the house servants, not the field hands, who would do it; and while the house servants might be willing to defend their homes when they were drafted into companies and regiments, and marched elsewhere to fight, then for the very reason that they are the most intelligent of slaves, they would be the very worst of soldiers in the Southern cause.

The arming of the slaves by the rebels would be the very recklessness of desperation. Under some circumstances it might enable them to hold out a little longer at certain points. But it would give the United States a vast armed militia of resident population in the very district where they will be needed; it would terminate party divisions in the loyal section of the country; and it would settle all cavil about the loyalty of the enormous majority of the people of the revolted section, for when slaves are freed they become, even to the most stupid Northern pander of slavery, "people," if not citizens or men and women.

But such is the present condition of the rebellious section that the urging of the suggestion would probably disintegrate the "nation" which Mr. GLADSTONE thinks that JEFFERSON DAVIS has "created."

EARL RUSSELL'S LETTER.

IN his reply to the manifesto of the rebel Congress sent to him by Messrs. SLIDELL, MASON, and MANN, Earl RUSSELL makes a singular historical misstatement. "Great Britain," he says, "has since 1783 remained, with the exception of a short period, connected by friendly relations with both the Northern and Southern States."

Great Britain, his lordship ought to remember, treated in 1783 with commissioners of the United States—a single power—and since 1789 Great Britain has had treaties and relations also with the United States—a single power. Great Britain has had no relations whatever with "Northern and Southern States," for such States are expressly forbidden by the Constitution from entering into any kind of relations with foreign powers. Great Britain has no more been connected with Northern and Southern States than the Government of the United States has been connected with Kent, Yorkshire, and Wales. Great Britain has no more been connected with Northern and Southern States in America than with the Department de l'Eure, and Algeria, and Martinique, in the French empire. She has relations with the Government of France and with the Government of the United States.

In what manner has Great Britain, as Lord RUSSELL declares, had friendly relations with both the Northern and Southern States? Has she sent embassadors to either? Has she made treaties with either? Has she received ministers from either? If, in case of internal commotion in Great Britain, Mr. SEWARD should calmly declare that the United States had always remained connected by friendly relations with the Highlands of Scotland, the city of Dublin, and the Tower Hamlets, he would merely show an ill-feeling toward the Government of Great Britain and a ludicrous ignorance.

Nor need it be said that our objection to Lord RUSSELL's letter only shows that neutrals please neither side. If he had said that the British Government still maintained its neutral position toward the Government of the United States, and those citizens who were endeavoring to cast off its authority, he would have stated the exact truth. But when he speaks of the struggle between the Northern and Southern States he implies that the contest is not between a government and insurgents, but between two governments. But if it be between two governments there is no reason why Great Britain, as a neutral power, should not equally recognize both. If France and Spain were at war, Great Britain, as a neutral, could use no other language than she does in regard to our struggle. Of necessity, therefore, she virtually concedes the political existence of the Southern Confederacy, and it is a needless insult to its representatives to designate it as the "so called" Confederacy.

Great Britain, as a government, has laid down the principle that immediately upon the outbreak of a rebellion in a country with which she is at peace she will hasten to invest the rebels with all the belligerent rights she concedes to the government. We will not say that she has abused the extraordinary principle she has asserted. But we do say that, viewing the chances of human affairs, it will not be many years before she will be earnestly praying that other nations may have very short memories or very long forbearance.

DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

CONGRESS

December 14:

IN the Senate, joint resolutions were reported from the Naval Committee and passed, tendering the thanks of Congress to Captain Winslow and Lieutenant Cushing. A petition was presented and referred, from several line officers in the army asking for additional compensation. The joint resolution offered and referred on the 13th, declaring free the wives and children of colored soldiers, was reported back with the recommendation that it be passed. A number of private petitions were reported; also a bill (Mr. Trumbull, Ill.), which was passed, authorizing the holding of a special session of the United States District Court in Indiana. Two resolutions (Mr. Chandler, Mich.) were offered. The first resolved that the Committee on Military Affairs be directed to inquire into the expediency of organizing an army corps for the defense of our Canadian border; the second that the Secretary of War make out a list of each ship and cargo destroyed by Anglo-Rebel privateers, with a valuation thereof with interest from the date of capture, and demand payment in full from the British Government. Both resolutions, being objected to by Mr. Johnson of Maryland, lie over. The resolution offered on the 12th by Mr. Doolittle of Wisconsin and tabled, relating to taxation on sales and an extra tax of 25 per cent. on railroad fares, was taken from the table after some debate, and referred. A resolution (Mr. Brown, Mo.) was adopted that the Committee on Military Affairs and the Militia be instructed to inquire into the expediency of repealing an act of Congress, of March 2[illegible], 1861, entitled an act to remove the United States arsenal from St. Louis and to provide for the sale of the lands on which it is located. The joint resolution from the House, giving notice to Great Britain of the termination of the Reciprocity Treaty, was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. The Senate then went into executive session.

In the House, a bill (Mr. Wilson, Iowa) was reported and passed so amending the act of July 17, 1862, to define the pay and emoluments of officers in the army, as to read that any alien of twenty-one years and upward who shall have enlisted in the volunteer or regular army or navy, and been honorably discharged, may become a citizen without any previous declaration, and shall not be required to prove more than one year's residence. Bills making appropriations for diplomatic and consular expenses were referred. A resolution (Mr. Brooks, N. Y.) was passed, that the Committee on Foreign Affairs inquire into the expediency of providing by treaty or otherwise for the protection of our Canadian and provincial frontier from murder, arson, and burglary on the pretense of rebel invasion. A bill, discussed at the last session, was reported from the Military Committee and passed (95 to 38), providing that all Major-Generals and all Brigadier-Generals in the military service of the United States who, on the 15th of February, 1865, shall not be in the performance of duty or service corresponding to their respective grades of rank, and who shall not have been engaged in such duty or service for three months continuously prior to that date, shall then be dropped from the rolls of the army, and all the pay and emoluments, or allowances of such general officers so dropped, shall cease from that date, and the vacancies thus occasioned may be filled by new promotions and appointments, as in other cases. But no officer is to be considered as included in the foregoing provision whose absence from duty shall have been occasioned by wounds received, or disease contracted in the line of his duty while in the military service, or by his being a prisoner of war in the hands of the enemy, or under parole, and any Major-General of volunteers, or Brigadier-General of volunteers who may have been appointed from the regular army under the authority given in section four of the act approved July 22, 1861, "to authorize the employment of volunteers to aid in enforcing the laws and protecting public property," and the acts amendatory thereto, who shall be so dropped from the rolls, shall not thereby be discharged from the service of the United States, but shall be remitted to his position and duty as an officer of the regular army. The Senate bill was passed, authorizing the purchase or construction of six steam revenue cutters on the Lakes and appropriating for that purpose one million of dollars. The House then resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, Mr. Washburne of Illinois in the chair. Mr. Brooks addressed the Committee in favor of toleration to slavery, and an immediate attempt to negotiate with the South.

December 15:

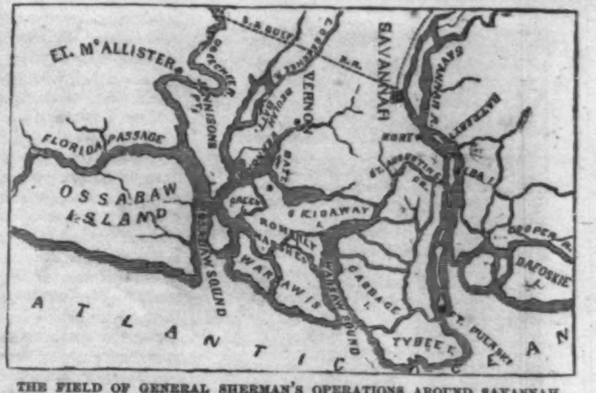
In the Senate, a resolution (Mr. Sumner, Mass.) was adopted that the President furnish to the Senate any information concerning the arrangement between the United States and Great Britain relating to the naval force to be maintained on the Lakes. A petition from officers of the Army of the James asking for an increase of pay was referred. A resolution (Mr. Lane, Kansas) was adopted that the Committee on the Conduct of the War be instructed to inquire as to the truth of the alleged charges that large numbers of disloyal persons are in the employment of the Government in the navy-yards, Quarter-master's, and Ordnance Departments, etc., of the country, to the exclusion of loyal men, with power to send for persons and papers. The resolution offered by Mr. Chanler on the 14th, but then objected to, in reference to the organization of an army corps to defend the Northern frontier, was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. A resolution (Mr. Brown, Mo.) was adopted that the Committee on Military Affairs and the Militia be instructed to inquire into the expediency of so amending the Act of Congress of March 8, 1792, entitled "An Act to more effectually provide for the National Defense, by establishing a uniform militia throughout the United States, and the several acts amendatory of the same," as shall provide for the enrollment of all male citizens between the ages of 18 and 45, resident in the respective States, without respect to color, and also to submit such other provisions as may tend more efficiently to organize the militia system of the United States, and report by bill or otherwise. A bill was passed transferring a gun-boat to the Government of Liberia. A resolution (Mr. Anthony, R. I.) was adopted instructing the Committee on the Conduct of the War to inquire into the facts connected with the assault on Petersburg, July 30, 1864. The Senate adjourned till the 19th.

In the House, a resolution (Mr. Holman, Ind.) was referred, directing the Secretary of War to furnish a copy of the order issued Dec. 21, 1863, in regard to troops enlisted on condition that they should be discharged when the regiments were mustered out of service; also the order dated December, 1863, addressed to the Governor of Massachusetts, in regard to troops to fill up old regiments; and also to inform the House whether the principles therein announced have been applied to all soldiers mustered to fill up old regiments. A resolution (Mr. Mallory, Ky.) was offered, requesting the President to communicate all papers bearing on the arrest and imprisonment of Lieutenant-Colonel Jacobs and Colonel Wolford. The resolution, objected to, lies over. The Senate bill was passed, providing for a special term of court for the District of Indiana. A resolution (Mr. Griswold, N. Y.) was adopted directing an investigation of all the facts as to the practical operation of the pension laws, as a system of permanent relief, and to inquire into the actual condition of the present invalids, and what measures should be passed to secure to them employment independent of pensions. A resolution (Mr. Cox, O.) was adopted that the Secretary of State communicate to this House all communications on file in his office, with reference to the difficulties upon the Northern borders, and which have not been referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. A resolution (Mr. Littlejohn, N. Y.) was referred, directing an inquiry as to the establishment of a Navy Yard at Oswego, New York. Mr. Schenck reported, from the Committee on Military Affairs, a bill for the better organization of the Subsistence Department. The Senate joint resolution was passed thanking Winslow and Cushing. A bill (Mr. Donnelly, Min.) was referred, requiring all persons applying for the benefit of the pre-emption and homestead laws to make oath that they had not deserted from the army, or resisted the draft, or secreted themselves to avoid being enrolled or drafted, or discouraged enlistments, and providing that whenever such offenses could be proved, the land claimed should revert to the Government. Mr. Davis, of Maryland, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, reported a resolution that Congress has a Constitutional right to an authoritative voice in declaring and prescribing the foreign policy of the United States, as well in the recognition of new Powers as in other matters, and it is the Constitutional duty of the President to respect that policy, not less in diplomatic relations than in the use of the National force when authorized by law, and the propriety of any declaration of foreign policy by Congress is sufficiently proved by the vote which pronounces it, and such proposition, while pending and undetermined, is not a fit topic of diplomatic explanation with any Foreign Power. The resolution was tabled, 69 to 63. Mr. Davis then asked to be relieved from service on the Committee on Foreign Relations. He said that the Secretary of State had, in the face of all Europe, slapped the House of Representatives in the face, in his correspondence with the French Government, and he asked the House whether it would not to-day assert its own dignity. Mr. Cox said if the House should excuse the gentleman from Maryland, he himself would ask to be excused from further service on the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Mr. Blaine, of Maine, said a parallel of history was sometimes worth looking at. The foreign correspondence with France had brought this question before the House. Three quarters of a century ago we had a difficulty with this same nation, and this difficulty resulted in giving us a precedent. The very same objections and appeals were made during the Administration of Washington by Genet, and pressed upon Jefferson, then Secretary of State, and he called attention to the facts (reading them from the Life of Jefferson). Genet and Jefferson had discussed a friendly proposition which Genet had brought from his own nation, and said it ought not to be adopted without consulting Congress. Genet having got into a more moderate tone, Jefferson stopped him, and explained the functions of our Government, saying, "that all these questions belonged to the Executive Department; and even if Congress were in session they could not be referred to it." Genet asked "if Congress was not sovereign?" and Jefferson said "No;" and that Congress was sovereign only in making laws, the Executive in executing, and the Judiciary in construing them. Said Genet, "Congress binds us to treaties and their observance." Jefferson said, "No, there are very few cases arising out of treaties of which Congress can take notice." Genet was satisfied. We have the same Constitution which existed at that day. He could not see any thing more mischievous than for Congress to plant itself on this resolution. By it we absolutely deny a concurrent power on the part of the Executive. It overturns the entire history of our Government, and sets out on an entirely new course. He thought the House justified its self-respect by laying the resolution on the table. Mr. Stevens, of Pennsylvania, said he was so obtuse that he had failed to see the least analogy between the cases cited by the gentleman from Maine. Jefferson very properly told Genet that Congress had no right to interfere with treaty stipulations—for treaties, by the Constitution, are the supreme law of the land. This is the whole extent of the precedent. He could not see that it had any bearing on the question before them. The House refused to excuse Mr. Davis from further service on the Committee on Foreign Affairs. A bill (Mr. Ashley, O.) was introduced, and ordered to be printed, to guarantee to certain States, subverted or overthrown by rebellion, a republican form of government. Mr. Ashley gave notice that on the 6th of January next he would call up the pending joint resolution from the Senate, proposing a Constitutional amendment for the abolition of slavery throughout the country, and that he would demand a vote upon the resolution the Monday following. A bill was passed making appropriation for invalid and other pensions, and the bill making appropriations for the diplomatic and consular establishments. Also the joint resolution, giving the true construction and meaning to so much of the Internal Revenue Act as relates to the tax on tobacco and cigars, and in addition to the above, passed a bill providing that, in computing the three years allowed by the twenty-first section of the act entitled: "An act increasing temporarily the duties on imports, and for other purposes," approved July 14, 1862, for the withdrawal of goods from any public store or bonded warehouse for exportation to foreign countries, or transhipment to any part of the Pacific or western coast of the United States, if such exportation or transhipment of any goods shall enter for the whole or for any part of the said term of three years, have been prevented by reason of any order of the President of the United States, the time during which such exportation or transhipment of such goods shall have been so prevented as aforesaid, shall be excluded from the said computation. The House adjourned till the 19th.

December 19:

In the Senate, a bill (Mr. Grimes, Iowa) was referred, to create the rank of Vice-Admiral in the navy. A resolution (Mr. Doolittle, Wis.) was referred, authorizing the President to expend ten million of dollars, or so much thereof as might be necessary to build fortifications and floating batteries for the protection of lakes and frontiers against attacks of piratical and hostile expeditions organized in the British provinces by enemies of the United States. An interesting debate followed the introduction of this resolution. Mr. Sumner took the ground that the St. Alban's raid had for its purpose the embroiling of the United States in a war with England. He thought we ought not to be caught in the trap. We were in war, and though we ought never to cease to claim our just rights, it would be wiser to hold these claims in abeyance until we had subdued the rebellion. A bill (Mr. Lane, Kansas) was referred, enabling the people of Colorado to form a State government. A bill (Mr. Henderson, Mo.) was referred to reimburse to the State of Missouri money expended for military purposes. A joint resolution (Mr. Henderson) was introduced to provide against the periodical invasion of Missouri by the rebels. Mr. Sumner's bill to remove the disqualification for carrying the mails on account of color was passed 21 to 5.

In the House, a bill was introduced to amend the Revenue laws by changing the time for levying the tax on whisky. Mr. Davis, of Maryland, again introduced the resolution laid on the table on the 15th, declaring the right of Congress to shape the foreign policy of the United States. It was passed. Mr. Stevens, from the Committee of Ways and Means, reported a bill to the effect that the act to provide internal revenue for the support of the Government, established June 30, 1864, be amended in the fifty-fifth section by striking out the word "February" wherever it occurs, and inserting in lieu thereof "January." The second section provides that, in addition to the duty now imposed by law, all spirits of domestic production held for sale on the 1st of January, 1865, shall be subject to a duty of fifty cents per gallon. The clause levying an additional tax was struck out. The bill, thus altered, was passed. The House went into Committee of the Whole, when Mr. Spaulding, of Ohio, spoke of the President's Message, indorsing its principles in regard to slavery.



THE FIELD OF GENERAL SHERMAN'S OPERATIONS AROUND SAVANNAH.

SHERMAN'S NEW CAMPAIGN.

That Sherman acted wisely in committing to Thomas the campaign in Tennessee, Hood's recent crushing defeat amply testifies. As to the wisdom of his own separate course in attempting a march across three hundred miles of the enemy's territory—that is demonstrated by the completely successful result. Sherman has reached Savannah, and, by the capture of Fort M'Allister on the 13th, has succeeded in establishing communication between his army and Dahlgren's fleet. In a dispatch, dated on the evening of that day, he declares that his army is in splendid condition and "equal to any thing." He has not lost a wagon on the trip, but he has destroyed over two hundred miles of rails, and consumed stores which were essential to the Confederate armies. He has gathered in a large supply of negroes, mules, horses, etc., and his teams are in better condition than when he set out. He has invested Savannah, which, according to his dispatch, has a garrison of 15,000, and a population of 25,000. The defense of Savannah has been committed to General Hardee.

ADMIRAL PORTER'S FLEET.

On the 13th of December a grand naval and military expedition, under the command respectively of Admiral Porter and General Butler, left Hampton Roads for Wilmington. The fleet consists of 65 war vessels, including some of the most formidable ships in the navy. Six of these are iron-clads. Upward of a hundred transports accompany the expedition. There is also good supply of picket-boats provided with torpedo machines. The *Stromboli*, the largest of our torpedo-boats, is included in the list. Altogether the fleet mans 820 guns. General Weitzel accompanies General Butler. The expedition probably reached New Inlet on the 16th. The recent destruction of the Weldon Railroad was intended to prevent General Lee from transporting troops rapidly to the point of attack.

CO-OPERATIVE EXPEDITIONS.

Toward the close of November General Canby sent out expeditions from Vicksburg and Baton Rouge to co-operate with Sherman. The expedition from Vicksburg, consisting of 2000 cavalry under E. D. Ostrand, returned December 4. On the 27th this column, after having moved on Jackson, attacked and destroyed the Big Black bridge on the Mississippi Central Railroad. This movement cut Hood off from large quantities of supplies and stores which had been accumulated at Jackson. Thirty miles of the track were destroyed, including culverts, and 2600 bales of cotton. The column from Baton Rouge, under General Davidson, advanced in the direction of Mobile.

A NEW DRAFT.

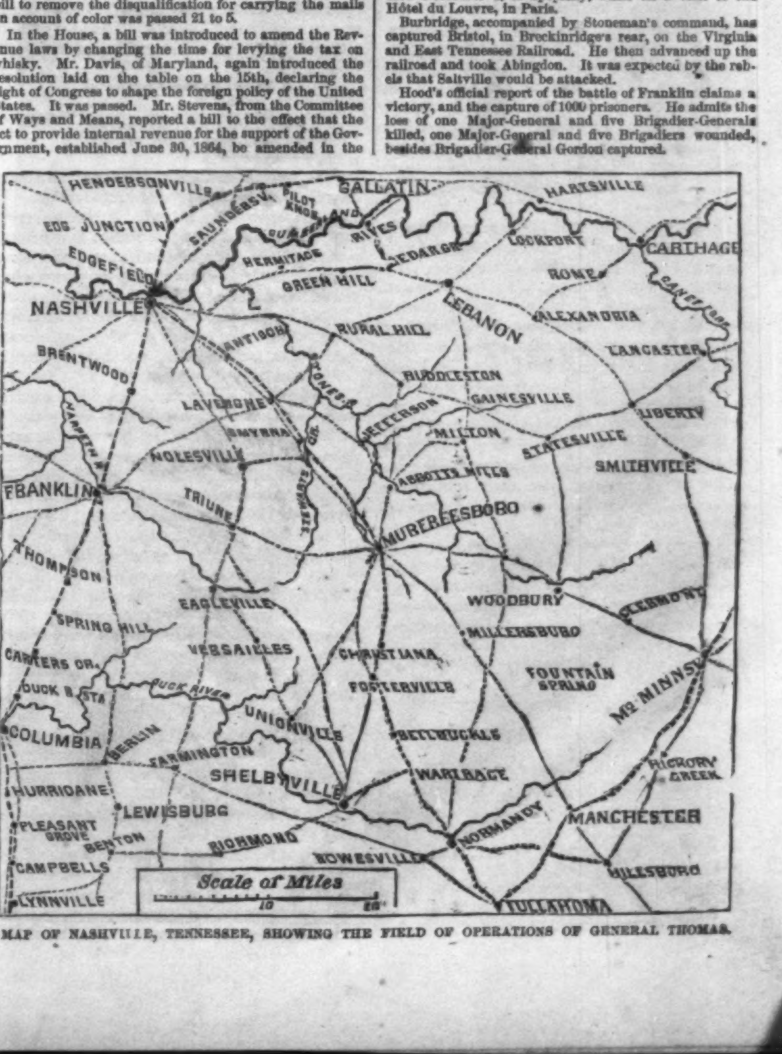
A call has been made for three hundred thousand more men, to supply deficiencies occasioned by large credits allowed in the previous draft.

NEWS ITEMS.

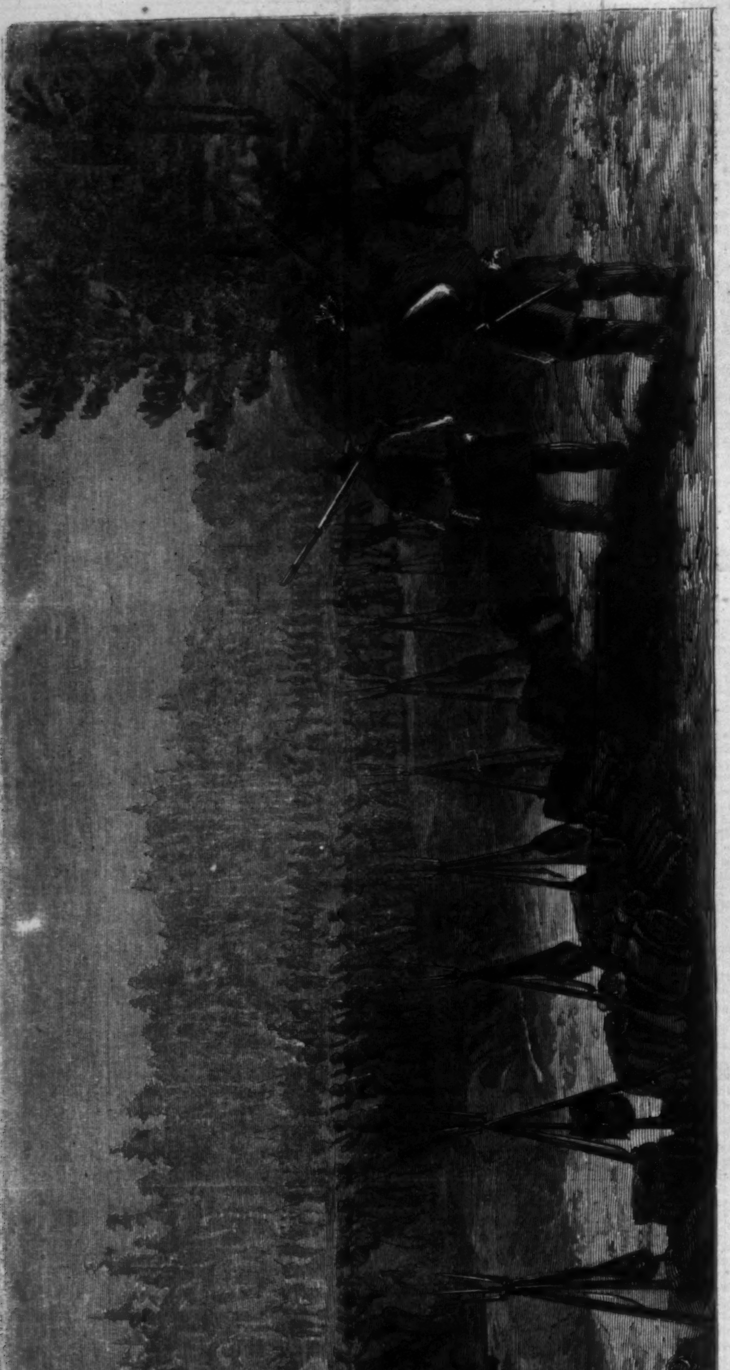
Our Minister to France, the Hon. William L. Dayton, died December 1, of apoplexy, while on a visit to the Hôtel du Louvre, in Paris.

Burbridge, accompanied by Stoneman's command, has captured Bristol, in Breckinridge's rear, on the Virginia and East Tennessee Railroad. He then advanced up the railroad and took Abingdon. It was expected by the rebels that Saltville would be attacked.

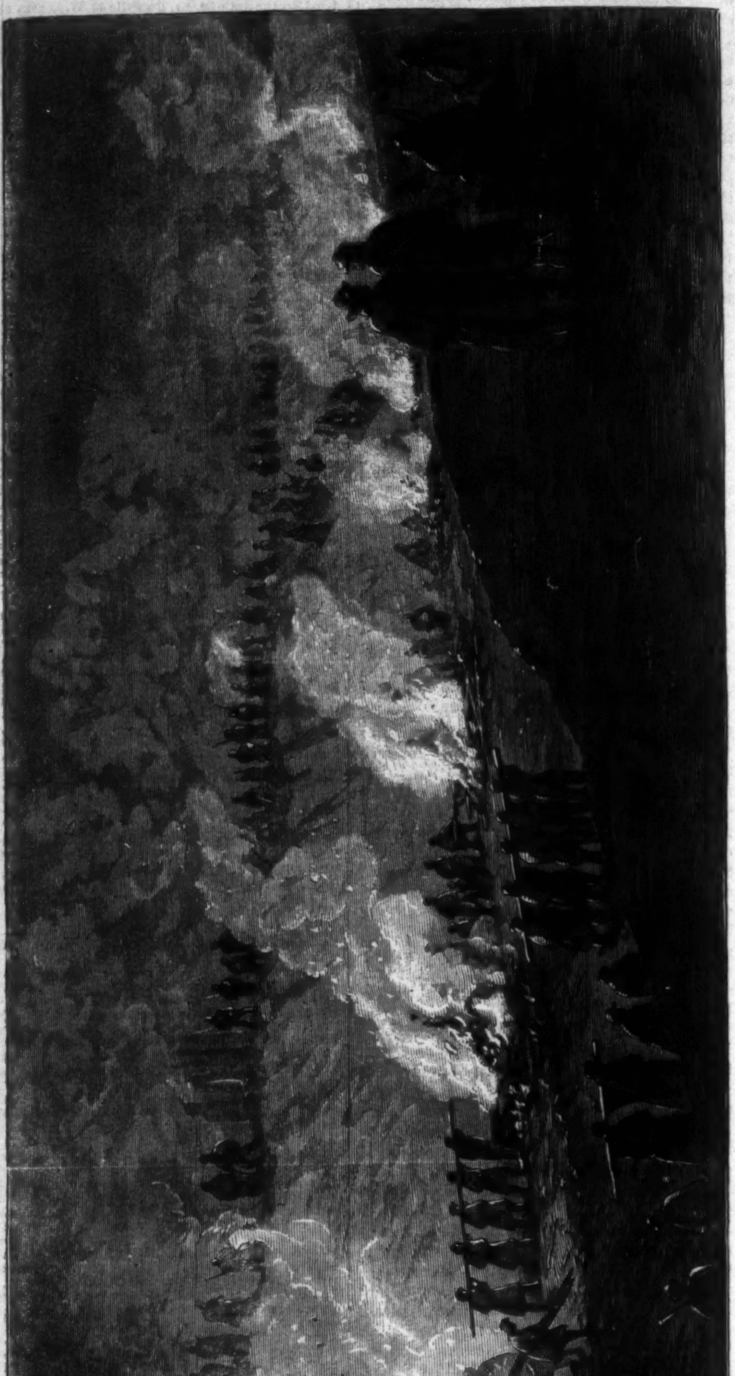
Hood's official report of the battle of Franklin claims a victory, and the capture of 1000 prisoners. He admits the loss of one Major-General and five Brigadier-Generals killed, one Major-General and five Brigadiers wounded, besides Brigadier-General Gordon captured.



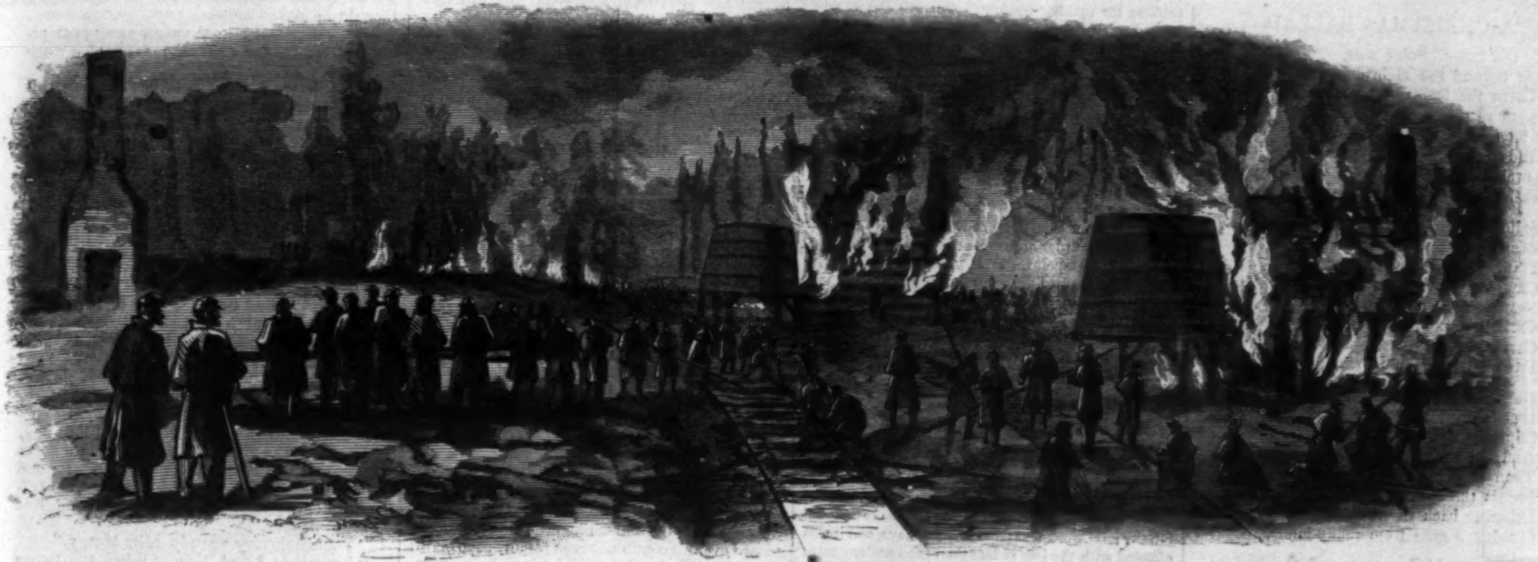
MAP OF NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, SHOWING THE FIELD OF OPERATIONS OF GENERAL THOMAS.



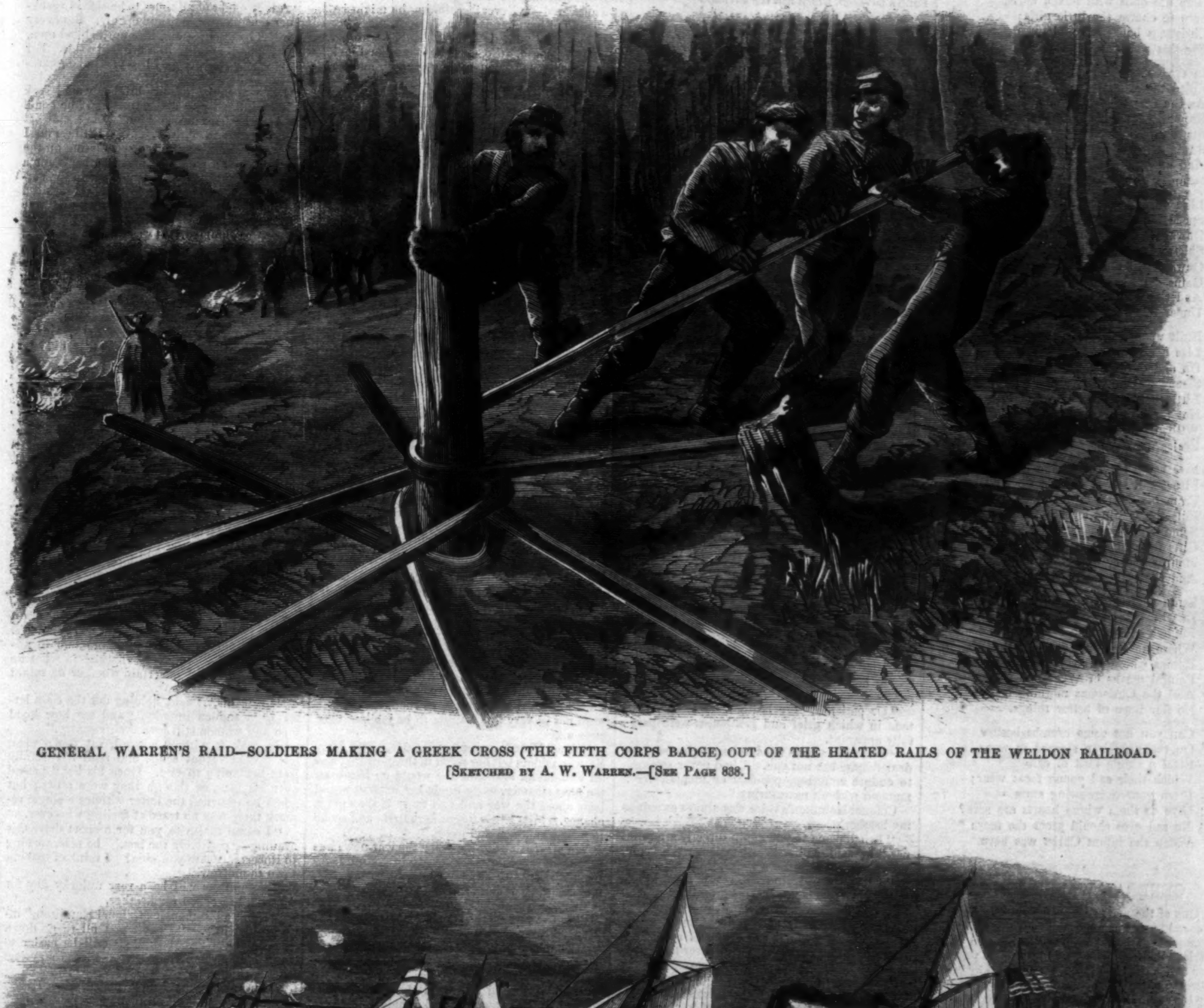
GENERAL WARREN'S RAID—THE FIFTH CORPS TEARING UP THE WELDON RAILROAD NORTH OF JARRET'S STATION, DECEMBER 8, 1864.—SKETCHED BY A. W. WARREN.—[SEE PAGE 838.]



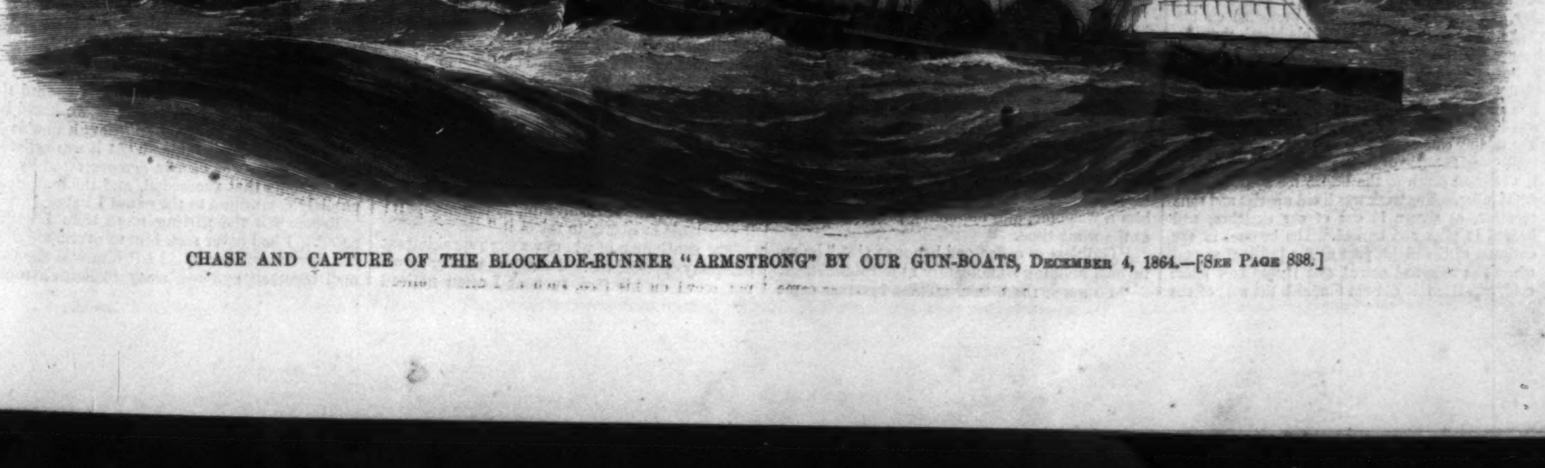
GENERAL WARREN'S RAID—DESTRUCTION OF THE WELDON RAILROAD NORTH OF JARRET'S—BURNING OF TIES AND RAILS.—SKETCHED BY A. W. WARREN.—[SEE PAGE 838.]



GENERAL WARREN'S RAID—DESTRUCTION OF WATER-TANKS AT JARRET'S STATION.—Sketched by A. W. Warren.—[See Page 838.]



GENERAL WARREN'S RAID—SOLDIERS MAKING A GREEK CROSS (THE FIFTH CORPS BADGE) OUT OF THE HEATED RAILS OF THE WELDON RAILROAD.
[Sketched by A. W. Warren.—[See Page 838.]



CHASE AND CAPTURE OF THE BLOCKADE-RUNNER "ARMSTRONG" BY OUR GUN-BOATS, December 4, 1864.—[See Page 838.]

A CHRISTMAS BALLAD.

In the far-off Polar seas,
Far beyond the Hebrides,
Where the icebergs, towering high,
Seem to pierce the wintry sky,
And the fur-clad Esquimaux
Glide in sledges o'er the snow,
Dwells St. Nick, a merry wight,
Patron saint of Christmas night.

Solid walls of massive ice,
Bearing many a quaint device,
Flanked by graceful turrets twain,
Clear as clearest porcelain,
Rearing at a lofty height
Christ's pure cross in simple white,
Carven with surpassing art
From an iceberg's crystal heart.

Here St. Nick, in royal state,
Dwells until December late
Clips the days at either end,
And the nights each way extend;
Then with his attendant sprites
Scours the earth on wintry nights,
Bringing back in well-filled hands
Children's gifts from many lands.

Here are whistles, tops, and toys,
Meant to gladden little boys;
Skates and sleds that soon will glide
O'er the ice or steep hill-side.
Here are dolls with flaxen curls,
Sure to charm the little girls;
Christmas books, with pictures gay,
For this welcome holiday.

In the court the reindeer wait;
Filled the sledge with costly freight.
As the first faint shadow falls
Promptly from his icy halls
Steps St. Nick, and grasps the rein:
Straight his coursers scour the plain,
And afar, in measured time,
Sounds the sleigh-bells' silver chime.

Like an arrow from the bow
Speed the reindeer o'er the snow.
Onward! Now the loaded sleigh
Skirts the shores of Hudson's Bay.
Onward, till the stunted tree
Gains a loftier majesty,
And the curling smoke-wreaths rise
Under less inclement skies.

Built upon a hill-side steep
Lies a city wrapt in sleep.
Up and down the lonely street
Sleepy watchmen pace their beat.
Little heeds them Santa Claus;
Not for him are human laws.
With a leap he leaves the ground,
Scales the chimney at a bound.

Five small stockings hang below,
Five small stockings in a row.
From his pocket blithe St. Nick
Fills the waiting stockings quick:
Some with sweetmeats, some with toys,
Gifts for girls, and gifts for boys;
Mounts the chimney like a bird,
And the bells are once more heard.

Santa Claus! Good Christmas Saint,
In whose heart no selfish taint
Findeth place, some homes there be
Where no stockings wait for thee—
Homes where sad young faces wear
Painful marks of Want and Care,
And the Christmas morning brings
No fair hope of better things.

Can you not some crumbs bestow
On these children steeped in woe;
Steal a single look of care
Which their sad young faces wear;
From your overflowing store
Give to them whose hearts are sore?
No sad eyes should greet the morn
When the infant Christ was born.

GENERAL WARREN'S RAID.

One of the most successful expeditions against General Lee's communications was that undertaken recently by General Warren in his raid on the Weldon Railroad, which we illustrate on pages 836 and 837. The Fifth Corps, accompanied by Mott's Division of the Second and Gregg's Cavalry, made up the expeditionary force which set out December 7, having been previously withdrawn from the lines around Petersburg and massed near the Avery House. In the midst of a driving rain, which continued all day and the next night, Warren moved rapidly down the Jerusalem Road to the Nottaway River, which he crossed by means of a pontoon at Freeman's Bridge. The next day, leaving a cavalry guard at the crossing, and protected on his flanks by cavalry, he continued his march through Sussex Court House, east of the railroad, toward Nottoway Bridge. This point was covered by the enemy's cavalry, which was steadily driven back. The bridge was reached at noon and destroyed. It was 200 feet long, and spanned the Nottoway River. The raiding column was now secure against any attack from Petersburg, and completely annihilated the railroad south of the bridge for a distance of eight miles. The track was lifted up, ties and rails together, as shown in one of our sketches, and heaped in piles and burned. The bonfire, in the darkness of the night, presented a brilliant spectacle. The rain had ceased, and it was now bitter cold, and this fact did not diminish the zest of the soldiers for making bonfires. Jarret's Dépôt was burned early in the morning of the 9th, and the work of destruction continued thence southward. During the day two bridges—each 60 feet long—were burned, and at night Warren had reached Bellfield Station, near the Meherrin River. Twenty miles of the railroad had been completely destroyed, and no opposition had been encountered. A reconnoissance toward Hicksford on the river having developed the fact that the enemy was strongly posted at that point, with considerable artillery, Warren turned northward on the 10th. On the return the town of Sussex Court House was burned in retaliation for the murder of several of our soldiers by the enemy at that point. A large number of contrabands accompanied the returning column.

In estimating the value of General Warren's raid it must be remembered that Lee had previously contrived to convey a large amount of supplies to his army by means of the Boydton plank-road, which connected the Southside Railroad with the point where the Weldon had been interrupted. He had also nearly completed a branch railroad from Stony Creek Station to the Southside Road. The portion of the railroad destroyed by Warren is south of Stony Creek Station, and until the road is repaired Lee is entirely cut off from eastern North Carolina, and from the portion of Virginia east of the Weldon Road. This raid will be of great service to General Grant; its work was done in three days, and it was effected with the loss of less than one hundred men. The great success of the expedition was due to General Warren's skill, and to his personal superintendence at every point. The Fifth Corps covered itself with glory, and especially General Crawford's Division, which had the advance.

CAPTURE OF THE "ARMSTRONG."

We give on page 837 an illustration of the chase and capture of the blockade-runner *Armstrong* by our gun-boats. She was captured 4th instant, eighty miles off Wilmington, by the steamers *R. R. Cuyler*, *Mackinaw*, and *Gettysburg*, after an exciting chase of eight hours, during which nearly one hundred shot and shell were fired, one of the shells striking her on the starboard quarter, then bursting and setting her on fire. The fire was extinguished before any serious damage was done. The *Armstrong* is very fast, and averages fourteen miles per hour. She is an iron side-wheel steamer of 700 tons burden. She was on her first trip from Wilmington, and was laden with cotton.

MARGARET MILLER.

A STORY IN NINE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER IV.

It was late that night when the little steamer came to her moorings. Twice she got aground, with the prospect of waiting for the returning tide; but "All hands forward!" and she slid over the shoals in triumph. Vainly we urged Robert to disregard the call, and avoid the misty night-air by remaining in the cabin. He could not be prevailed upon while ladies were assisting to lighten the boat. The consequence was an increased hoarseness next morning, accompanied with great weariness and weakness.

Neither of us went to breakfast; for, with broken rest and solicitude, I was almost as much exhausted as my brother.

Colonel Hamilton came at ten to give Robert another taste of the pine-woods—"Perhaps the last," he said—and was surprised to find him so ill.

"But you'll be all right again in a day or two," he said, encouragingly. "Every convalescent has 'pull-backs,' to teach him prudence perhaps."

"Or patience," my brother responded, in a tone in which grief and gentleness were painfully apparent.

"Some of us have need to be taught that, my dear fellow, but not you. I had never strength to endure suffering, physical or mental, for a moment without murmuring."

Colonel Hamilton's voice was almost as soft as my brother's.

"I shall come to you again directly after dinner," he said, as he turned to leave the room. "Your sister will need a siesta."

"I have been trying to prevail upon her to take either rest or a ride this morning," Robert said.

"My carriage is at the door, and I would gladly accompany her to another of my flower-gardens. Possibly we might discover the bracelet lost on that other very unfortunate excursion," he added, turning to me.

It is true I had lost the bracelet with which I encircled my bouquet; but never having mentioned the circumstance it puzzled me to understand how the Colonel should have learned the fact. There was not a ray of intelligence in the glance which met my look of inquiry, only a quiet waiting for a decision of the question of the ride.

"I am too fatigued to ride this morning, but the siesta is a temptation to which I will yield willingly."

Robert and I dined together in the full enjoyment of dressing-gown and slippers. He was more comfortable than in the morning, and spoke with comparative ease, though the cherry-like glow of his cheeks mocked the fainter bloom of health. While we were lingering over our coffee the Colonel came to fulfill his promise.

"Guiltless of cigar," my brother said, smiling him a welcome, and motioning him to be seated at the same time.

"Guiltless of coffee and bananas also," he returned, nodding significantly at our dessert.

"So much the better. These bananas came by the last boat from Key West, and are very fine."

Jimmy was ordered to bring an extra cup and plate. I played hostess until a second cup of coffee was offered and declined, then retired.

A long, unbroken slumber, a sweet consequent of the last night's nervous wakefulness, ensued. The last thing I heard was the low, indistinct sound of the gentlemen's voices in the adjoining apartment. When I awoke the sun was far down in the west. Listening, I heard no sound from my brother's room, and wondered whether he had not gone below. A few minutes sufficed for my toilet; then raising the latch softly, I entered, and found him sleeping upon the sofa, the Colonel still sitting beside him, and holding his hand as tenderly as a woman.

"I talked your brother to sleep," he said, apologetically.

"He is no worse, I hope?"

"Oh no! only a little fatigued. A day or two of rest will bring him up again, I think."

"I am afraid I slept longer than you stipulated for. I am very much obliged to you for your care of my brother."

"You will accept nothing for yourself then?"

"Nothing."

He was gone, and I sat down in the seat he had just deserted. My brother slept still, though disturbedly. Changes, like crowding thoughts, passed over his countenance so rapidly as to alarm me. He whispered inarticulately at first; then, his features calming down to a smile, he uttered, distinctly, "Whatever happen, you promise then never to lose sight of her:" and held his breath like one listening for a reply.

I answered—"Never!" thinking he might be dreaming of home and Aunt Hannah.

"God bless you, my good friend!" was his earnest response. So earnest it awoke him! His eyes fastened upon me inquiringly, and he said,

"I thought Hamilton was with me, Margy!"

"He has just left you," I replied. "I slept the whole afternoon, and he sat with you until I came."

"He is one of the kindest of men, Margy!"

"Every one appears to think so, Robert."

"And why do you not like him?"

"I accord to him noble qualities, but noble qualities should not blind one to radical defects."

"What are the faults you discover in him?"

"The chief of all—*disloyalty!*"

The next morning we were aroused by the stage-horn blowing vigorously for the Hillsboro ferry-man. It seemed to say—"Hasten up! I bring you news, great news for the glorious cause." Every one in Tampa knew the language of Jerry Dining's horn when it neared the river; and there was a general rush for the ferry.

"What next?" I asked myself, as the shouts of the men and boys penetrated to the heart of the town. "Has Fort Pickens so soon followed Sumter, or another cowardly Twiggs delivered the arsenals and arms of another State into the hands of rebels and traitors?"

Neither; but the blood of Massachusetts men had reddened the streets of Baltimore on the anniversary of the battle of Lexington. For this, bonfires were lighted and the crowd huzzaed.

Robert was unable to go down to breakfast, and I went alone. All was excitement and ebullition. Maryland had shown herself worthy of a place in the Southern Constellation. Massachusetts and the scoundrel Butler were on their way South; South Carolina and the heroic Maxey Gregg were on their way North; there was fun ahead; one man to six was all the South wanted!

God of heavens! what an hour, when the sons of patriots strike at their country's flag, and brothers delight in brothers' blood! Only a few looked grave that morning, as though civil war were not so very fine a thing to be jubilant over after all.

Colonel Hamilton was not at table. Mrs. Harris, who seldom left her room in the morning, was all animation, and said she would go home on the next steamer, as no doubt her negroes would hear about the war and run away if they got a chance. Miss Kittie forgot her mirth, and spoke in a tone subdued and quiet.

We all met at dinner, when the war-news was again the exciting theme. Robert and I remained silent until a lady whom I disliked said, maliciously, I fancied: "We are going to have more speeches at the Court-house to-night, Miss Miller, to rouse up the people. Will you go and listen?"

"Thank you, no, Madam! It is not necessary to go abroad to hear treason nowadays."

Every eye at the table was upon me, I felt certain. I looked only at Robert, who sat as undisturbed as though I had simply said "No" to the offer of bread or butter.

"Who are to be the speakers?" Miss Kittie asked, more in the tone of one who would break a disagreeable silence than who cares for information.

"Madam Rumor is not communicative on that point," she replied, gayly. "With strictest inquiry I could only learn that our friend Colonel Hamilton here would improve the occasion, and that the new preacher, whose secession views have already been somewhat elaborated, would not. How do you think the Colonel will construe your remark, Miss Miller?"

I was indignant, but managed to smother both anger and contempt so as to reply haughtily and coolly:

"It is of no consequence to me, Madam, how he construes it. If it suit him, he can accept it; if not, he is at liberty to reject it."

The gentleman of whom we were speaking sat obliquely opposite me. There was neither frown nor scowl on his face, such as I often noticed when he was displeased. On the contrary, I thought he looked amused, and it annoyed me.

Miss Kittie and I went out on the upper piazza after dinner, while the gentlemen were smoking below.

"I don't understand a thing what all this quarrel is about," she said, sadly. "If the South is in the wrong I don't wish to know, for I am a Southerner. But I don't see, any how, why individuals need indulge in personal spite, like that impertinent old thing at table. I can not help liking you just as well as though you had been born in my grandfather Gadsden's State instead of my grandfather Harris's; and I wish you and your brother would go home with us to Mississippi."

"Brave for Miss Kittie Harris!" exclaimed a voice before I had time to reply to her warm-hearted words, and Colonel Hamilton stood near us, knocking the ashes from his cigar. "Those are my sentiments, well expressed. We have too many haters on our side, and I have no reason to doubt the feeling is most heartily reciprocated."

"I will answer for the North, Sir," I returned, warmly. "The North feels no hatred against the South. She loves our common country, and is simply determined to stand by it, and not suffer it to be overthrown, even though compelled to crush its foes."

"You speak very warmly, Miss Margy."

"I speak as I feel, then. When the troops of the United States can, if necessity require, march from Maine to Texas, and from Texas to Maine again peaceably, I shall be able to speak more calmly and coolly."

"A lady ought at all times to be safe in speaking her sentiments freely and openly. But every cause has its fanatics and its unprincipled men, who scruple at nothing in a crisis like this. For your brother's sake, then, I beg you to be guarded, Miss Miller."

"Do not think, Sir, my brother would seek safety by infidelity to his country. If he could be so base I would disown him."

He bowed and retired. Miss Kittie and I were again alone, and fell to speculating on the probabilities of a blockade, and whether Tampa was of sufficient importance to be put in the catalogue of Southern ports. Chris had commenced the packing of their trunks, that they might be ready at a minute's warning when the next steamer was signaled. It was due the next day, and Kittie begged we would accompany them down the Bay.

While we were talking about it, and planning a correspondence, Robert came with a letter for me. There was an unmistakable look of anxiety on his face, though masked with a smile.

"A letter for you from New York, Margy. I was expecting one myself, but it did not come."

"I will read you mine, then, as a sort of compensation," I said, soothingly. "It is from a mutual friend, and gives account of a great demonstration at Union Square."

I began to read, and when I came to where the battle-rent flag of Sumter was taken amidst deafening cheers to the bronze statue and placed in the hand of the "Father of his Country" by the very same man who had nailed it to the mast amidst the storm of rebel shot and shell, my brother's feelings overcame him, and he wept like a child. Kittie's eyes moistened also; but it was not one of my moments of tenderness. Had I been a man I would have made a speech then and there, for I felt strong enough for martyrdom.

Colonel Hamilton's carriage stood at the door. It was not long before we heard his well-known step, firm and equal, though soft as a woman's. He came, looked inquiringly from one to another, as though suddenly checked in what he wished to say, and uncertain whether he might not be an intruder.

"Read this," I said, holding out the open letter by a sudden impulse, "and see how loyal men and women still love their country."

He took it without a word, sat down upon one of the vacant seats, and read it carefully from beginning to end. Once his hand passed over his eyes, as though they were misty; but when he returned the letter without a single remark there was no trace of feeling whatever.

"I came to invite you for a short drive this evening—'positively the last,'" he said, turning to Robert. "Are you able? I think of leaving town to-morrow."

"To-morrow will be a very unlucky day for us then," returned my brother.

"Don't go to-morrow, Colonel Hamilton," interposed Kittie. "I want you all to go down the Bay with us. I think it will be easier to say good-by there than here. Please stay just one more day."

"I would gladly be persuaded, Miss Kittie, but my letters to-day are imperative. I have never before felt reluctance in leaving Tampa."

I brought my brother's palmetto and dust-coat when he decided to ride, then went with Kittie to sit with her mother until tea.

Early that night the citizens began to gather around the Court-house. We heard loud cheering for Beauregard and the Baltimore boys; cheering again for South Carolina and Maxey Gregg; then a vociferous call for Colonel Hamilton.

He was smoking on the lower piazza, but at the call arose and walked leisurely toward the assembled crowd. Not long after we heard his voice in earnest declamation, though unable to distinguish what he said. That it was satisfactory, however, was clearly demonstrated by the noisy shouts that succeeded, and the man stood publicly committed to the cause I hated.

Robert felt the parting more than I anticipated. I had never seen him so overcome since the day we left home. I left him and the Colonel together, and ran away to Kittie's room, for their grief was sympathetic. More than half an hour elapsed before the latter came to the door of Mrs. Harris's room to say farewell. He offered me his hand a second time, and said, "Remember me always as your brother's friend and yours, Miss Margy." The touch of his hand for a moment became a pressure, and he was gone.

I did not return to Robert until he sent for me; then the name of his friend was broached by neither of us. We talked of Kittie, however; he regretting that he felt unable to accompany the little party from the hotel to the steamer, and insisting that I should go without him. All day we waited in momentary expectation of the signal which would take away another friend whom we had found in that far Southern land. It was nearly nightfall when it came at last.

The prospect of a moonlight excursion could not induce me to leave Robert, who had been out of spirits all day. In vain Miss Kittie laughed, and tried to say gay things as usual to both of us—descriptive of the times we would have when we came "to make that visit to the old plantation." She broke down in the midst, and burst into a flood of weeping. We put our arms around her, and held her fast until Chris came the second time to take her away.

"I will write to you every mail," she said; "every single mail! Don't forget me."

We stood on the piazza waving the departing carriage until it was out of sight; then hand in hand went back to our own rooms, feeling more than ever that we were alone—"strangers in a strange land."

A letter from Colonel Hamilton came the next week, postmarked Tallahassee. I did not read it, but from its cheering influence on Robert inferred it was the bearer of agreeable tidings. The Colonel's name seldom passed between us. I sometimes wished Robert would speak of him, knowing how much he missed him.

But the first thing that really enlivened us was Miss Kittie's journal, sent back from New Orleans. It was a document calculated to dispel heart-shadows, like its fair originator; and we laughed as heartily over "Kittie's three days' adventure at sea" as we had often done at her wild gayety on land. Chris's sea-sickness, and her mother's anxiety to get home before the darkeys heard the war-news, were worthy of an artist.

Our friends had been gone a month, and we were learning to live without them, riding, when Robert was able, in the morning, lounging on the piazzas and reading the news at evening. Our kind host and hostess were indefatigable in their exertions for our comfort and happiness, no less in their attempts to shield from petty annoyances than in efforts to give positive pleasure. We came to regard the war as a fixed fact, our separation from home complete. Day after day we had heard the silver cords of the dear old Union parting, and thought sorrowfully of the deeds of our fathers; of their toil and sufferings, their hopes and prayers, while laying the foundation of their glorious work.

We thought again of the blessed fruits of that Union; of the peace, prosperity, and happiness which had flowed in like a river, until tyrants grew pale before the majesty of the infant nation, ready to match its strength with giants of the Old World. We thought, too, of the comrades who had stood side by side in the Senate-Chamber and on the battle-field while that nation was walking from glory to glory—parted now, and grown to mortal foes; and more sorrowfully still we thought of brothers of the same parents and hearth-stone who had become more bitter in their enmity than the sons of strangers. Then the mocking shouts, already heard in the distance from loud-mouthed despots, grated in my ears, until I could have fallen on my knees in all humility, and begged our misguided brethren to return to our father's house.

Such thoughts were the result of calm, undisturbed reflection. But let the antagonist have spoken again to assert the principle, or palliate the offense of those same erring men, and gentle thoughts would have taken wing in a moment; we would have reasserted "No truce with traitors; no concession nor compromise; no oil on the bitter waters of strife; justice is inflexible, and demands the uttermost farthing."

CHAPTER V.

I HAVE come now to the saddest leaf of my record. After lingering over trifling incidents to keep the great event as far away as possible, it must be met here again in imagination as it had to be met first in terrible reality. Months and years of heartaching have not deadened the pang. I have learned to think of other loved and lost ones with a sort of pensive pleasure; but Robert's memory is forever watered with tears. Never until death closes the gates of life behind me also shall I cease to lament thee, O my brother!

Brief as the final struggle of his existence will be my record of his closing life. It is too painful to linger over. I thought him better, at least no worse, and so wrote to Kittie on the very morning of his death. Familiarity with his gentle, invalid ways, with his habitual cough, sometimes better, sometimes worse, with his patient weakness and weariness, made me insensible to the ever-present danger. Moreover, from the first I had fully believed the change of climate would effect an ultimate cure. That he knew better, and saw the event not far distant, I know now from the testimony of his own words, the last he penned:

> —"The time is at hand when I shall have to claim the fulfillment of your promise. I have not a single doubt of your fidelity to the sacred trust imposed on you—not one. I only fear lest, in these uncertain times, your life may be cut off untimely. I have nothing to repeat, nothing further to add. Do not try to come to me. Death has no terrors, and but one pang. O God, how bitter! Poor Margy! I can not tell her, nor would it avail to lighten the stroke. You can say, when it is all over, how much more I have suffered for her than for myself. My dear Colonel, what should I have done without you? I thank Heaven hourly for giving me such a friend. Your two letters are sealed carefully, and marked—*to be returned.* Take my dying love and blessing."

Little did I think when placing the writing materials before him what he was about to write, or that the precious words would ever be returned to me, to be read, wept over, and preserved among my dearest treasures.

We had spoken the day previous of going with the Major to fish for sheep-head in the Hillsboro. He came for us; Robert complained of dullness and indisposition to make the effort. The Major did not urge him, but promised a splendid fry for dinner.

After he was gone Robert lay upon the sofa and slept until noon; awoke with a sense of chilliness, although it was June in a tropical climate. I wrapped him in blankets, and sent for a physician without feeling much alarm. When he came, he was sleeping again very heavily. He examined his pulse, felt of his limbs, and inquired if he had slept as usual the preceding night. I thought so. He ordered warm balm tea to promote perspiration, and said he would call again in the evening. It would be better not to disturb him.

Dinner was sent up. I waited for him, and sat hour after hour thinking how much he would be refreshed by such quiet sleep. Not a shadow flitted over his features; he slept without a murmur, as though mind and body were alike steeped in repose, until almost nightfall, when his eyes unclosed and fastened upon me inquiringly. How bright they looked in their fixed, earnest gaze!

"What a nice long sleep you have had, Robert! Do you feel better for it?"

He would have spoken, but began to cough, and motioned for the bowl, at the same time putting his handkerchief to his lips. He could not conceal it this time. One scream brought half a dozen persons to the door. Robert's hand grasped mine convulsively, his head drooped on my shoulder, while the red tide was pouring fast from the seat of life.

"Don't touch him!" I exclaimed when they would have removed him—"don't touch him, unless you can save him!"

No mortal could do that. Long before the blood ceased to flow his eyes turned heavenward and his breath departed.

What followed I do not know. Who unclasped his hand from mine, took his head from my shoulder, or wiped his red lips, I never knew. Some one did it tenderly, I have no doubt, and removed my own blood-stained dress, and laid me upon the bed where I found myself with returning consciousness.

I had forgotten nothing. The last thread memory dropped was the first one she picked up. I thought I had only fainted for a few minutes.

"Take me to my brother again. I feel better now."

"Are you strong enough?" asked kind Mrs. Thomson. "I am afraid you are not."

I was resolute; and leaning on her arm reached the door of Robert's room. It was dark and silent. She opened the shutters. The bed had been removed, but a low couch stood in its place: upon it lay my brother, dressed neatly in black. I was bewildered.

"Is not this Thursday?" I inquired.

"Saturday," she replied. "You have been ill, Miss Miller."

I was ill again, and would have fainted but for Mrs. Thomson's next words.

"They wished to bury your brother this morning, but neither the Major nor your friend would allow it."

"Bury my brother!" I exclaimed. "Oh, Mrs. Thomson! I am going to take Robert home."

In an agony of grief I threw myself upon the couch, pressed my cheek to his, and said:

"They shall not bury you, Robert, my poor brother! I will never leave you here alone, never! We will go home together to Aunt Hannah."

I heard smothered sobs. Some one raised me gently but firmly from the couch and carried me back to my own room. My eyes were closed; I saw nothing, heard nothing, until Mrs. Thomson came and sat down by me again, took my hand, and said:

"Don't fret any more, dear Miss Margy! They shall not bury him."

With this assurance I must have slept.

The next morning the sun shone brightly into my chamber. If it had been shining for the last three days I had not seen it. I tried to think and weave some plans; but my thoughts would go no further than "Robert is dead!"

Little Jimmy, "Grinning Jimmy," as Miss Kittie used to call him, brought up a bouquet with my breakfast, and waited for me to notice it.

"It is pretty, Jimmy, but I don't care for flowers any more."

"Mars'r Robert liked dem dar sort, Miss. Poor Mars'r Robert!"

Jimmy had been my brother's waiter ever since our arrival, and had learned all his little likes and dislikes, even to his favorite flowers. I looked up, and saw the boy's eyes fixed sorrowfully upon me. His mouth was wide open, and he began to sing, with that plaintive inflection no Saxon tongue has ever caught,

"Dar'll be no more sorrow dar!
Dar'll be no more sorrow dar!
In Heben above, whar all is love,
Dar'll be no more sorrow dar!"

Burning drops were on my cheeks.

"Don't cry, Miss, don't! Mars'r Robert's done gone to dat dar 'appy Land."

"I don't see it, Jimmy! It is out of sight."

"On'y one Jurdin riber to cross, den we find 'em sure, Miss."

The fountain of tears was opened. I took the flowers and went into Robert's room by myself. Some one had opened the shutters, and let in the sweet morning air and sunshine. There he lay, wearing the same smile still, the very semblance of life. Kneeling down beside him, I put the flowers in his hand, kissed his pale forehead and lips, and struggled to be calm. But the barriers were broken; the tide would gush forth.

"Oh, Robert! are you really smiling upon me? Tell me where you are now! Do you know I am all alone in the world since you left me? All gone; father, mother, George, Willie, and little Dobby. I can not live alone! Robert, come back for me!"

The piazza door suddenly unlocked, and some one entered the room. I could not be mistaken in that tall, manly figure.

"Colonel Hamilton!"

He came near, put his hand upon my head, and was silent. I heard him weep.

"Colonel Hamilton, see what death has done!"

"Miss Margy, let me try to comfort you. It breaks my heart to hear you go on so. I promised Robert to be both father and brother to you; and I promise you now, here in his presence, that you shall never want a friend while I live."

I tried to thank him.

"Have you just arrived?"

"I have been here two days. Your brother's letter reached me Wednesday morning. I set out without an hour's delay, and arrived Friday evening—too late."

"Did Robert send for you?"

"No, Miss Margy, but I wished to be with him at the last. Thank God, he needed no one but you!"

He took a letter from his pocket, quietly unfolded it, and read a portion of what I have before quoted:

> "Do not try to come to me. Death has no terrors, and but one pang. O God, how bitter! Poor Margy! I can not tell her. When it is over, you can say how much more I suffered for her than for myself."

He read no more, and was returning it to the envelope.

"Would you part with that, Colonel Hamilton? I have no letters of Robert's, except a few written while he was in college. We were almost always together."

"You shall certainly have it if you wish," he replied. "Much as I prize it, your claim is before mine."

"I have no claim, Sir. I am willing to owe it to your generosity."

"Margy, have you eaten any breakfast?"

"I can not eat."

"I will ask Mrs. Thomson to send you a fresh piece of toast, and a cup of coffee. When you have taken it, I wish to speak to you again of your brother."

He led me to the door of my room, and said: "I will come for you in half an hour." Mrs. Thomson came herself with the second tray of food.

"I know just how thin you like your toast, and have browned and buttered it myself. It is nice, honey, and you will eat it when I have taken so much pains."

"I will try."

I ate it all, choking with every mouthful.

"You'll be better now," she said. You've took nothing but drink for three days. Mr. Thomson shall shoot a bird for you to-morrow. I want to comb your hair now, and dress you myself. Your hair is in a dreadful snarl."

I submitted as before.

"Do you care which of these dresses you put on?"

"No."

"The bombazine has crape folds. 'Tis the most suitable; and here's a collar and undersleeves to match. I hear the Colonel in the other room again. You'll soon be ready."

A light rap at the door was answered by Mrs. Thomson.

"Has she eaten?"

"Like a lamb."

"Thank you. Your husband has perfected every other arrangement. I must speak with Miss Miller now."

"Come, Margy," he said, taking my hand and leading me back into my brother's room. "I have to tell you now of some of the things Robert wished. In the first place, to be buried in a metallic coffin, which fortunately has been procured."

"I am not going to have him buried here, Sir. I will take him home!"

"How can you?"

"By way of Key West."

"It may be months, or even years, before we have another steamer. The blockade is effected."

"I will go across the country, then."

"It is utterly impossible. Listen to me, Miss Margy. If you wish to go home, I will procure you a passport and take you to the line myself. When, as soon as the war-clouds break away, if I am still living, I will bring you your brother. I promise you this, on my honor as a man."

"I can not go away and leave him here, Colonel Hamilton."

"I have another proposition to make, one which Robert liked better on account of your health. Simply that you should remain in Florida until the close of the war. He made arrangements which I will communicate to you to-morrow. I must now speak of the burial, which will have to take place to-day. Have you ever visited the cemetery?"

"I can not have him buried here; it will kill me! Oh, if it only would!"

"I rode out this morning early, and selected the spot I liked best. Would you like to go and see it?"

"No, it don't matter."

"True, it doesn't matter much. Who would you like to have read the service?"

"Not that minister who abuses the North so. He should be buried without a prayer sooner."

"Very well! I do not like him either. But there is Dr. Branch, who is a Northerner and a good man too. He has been a preacher. I will send for him to do it. Now, Margy, go and rest. I will come for you again in an hour."

"Colonel Hamilton, do you say Robert is to be buried in an hour, and ask me to go away and rest? Can you be so cruel as not to leave him to me one day longer?"

"I would gladly grant all you ask, but it is impossible."

His decision alarmed me.

"I *must* stay here with him this morning, Colonel Hamilton! Go and leave me alone. You don't know what it is to be so utterly bereft."

"My poor child! I pity you."

"You can not help me. Leave me, and I will try to do what is right. Don't think me ungrateful."

He went away. I heard him pacing up and down the piazza a long time, while I sat trying to reduce my broken thoughts to order. "Is it true," I asked, "I can not take him home?" Reason replied, "It is true. He must be laid here for a time, then his precious dust may be removed to mingle with kindred dust. It is you who should see it done, not a stranger."

I was gazing at Robert all the time. What wonder if my excited imagination for the moment believed it was he who counseled me to rise superior to weakness, or that I should have responded,

"For your sake, Robert, God helping me, I will do it!"

Kneeling down beside him, and clasping both his cold hands in mine, I prayed, as I had never prayed before, that Heaven would hear and help me in my weakness. What bitter, bitter cries burst forth in my anguish! What groans, and sobbings, and tears, until other sobs mingled with mine; other forms were kneeling around me. Then above all arose a clear, calm voice, entreating peace and consolation for the stranger's heart-broken in their midst.

When the voice ceased some one led me away. Mrs. Thomson brought bonnet and mantle and tied them on. Her husband came and said he would walk with the bearers, Colonel Hamilton would take us. The citizens, two and two, walked before the coffin, the bearers beside it. A solitary carriage followed, until it came to a clump of cedars, and an open grave in one corner of the rural cemetery. There they left my poor brother.

HUMORS OF THE DAY.

New Nigger Song, unpopular with School-Boys.—"The happy land of *Canaan.*"

Keeping Silence.—The females of some of the Indian tribes, in order to keep silence, fill their mouths with water. Our women fill theirs with tea, and gossip more than ever.

What an insect is man! Even royalty itself is infinitely small. In fact, to borrow the announcement of Mr. Fechter, "The King's but a fly."

We hear a great deal about young ladies' accomplishments. Bless their little filagree hearts! before they marry they ought to perform quarantine in cotton, and serve seven years to pies and puddings.

What color, Sir, should be a horse
That's yours, and yours alone?
D'ye give it up? Why, Sir, of course,
That horse must be *your roan.*

Too Happy.—A newly-married man says if he had an inch more of happiness he could not possibly live. His wife is obliged to roll him on the floor and pat him with a shingle every day to keep him from being too happy. "Wait till he has been married a year," comments our Fiend, "and he will probably feel like patting his wife with the shingle, and that not lovingly."

Sporting Fashion.—*Dangerous Style of Tie for a Fox-hunter.*—A Fall for the Neck.

What is the most sensational Periodical of the day?—The Powder Magazine.

A merchant running out from his counting-house to get his lunch, was impeded in his progress by a poor man with a wheel-barrow. In his excitement, the merchant told the man to go with his wheel-barrow to—no matter where. Pat looked round, and curtly replied, "Maybe, your Honor, we should be more in your Honor's way there than here."

When you see a dwarf, you may take it for granted that his parents never made much of him.

Phrenologists place the bump of invention upon the skull; but a nose three inches long is a great projector.

The oyster is indeed a queer fish. We have long heard of the oyster in love, but it is for the last few weeks and the Berlin papers to teach us that there is such a thing as the oyster on the Spree. But a fact it is that the delicious bivalve is to be found in that Prussian stream!

A Foul Joke.—Why is Harry like the place where chickens roost?—Because he's a Hen-nery.

The Neatest Thing in Crinolines.—A lady's foot.

"Why, Sambo, how black you are!" said a gentleman the other day to a negro waiter at a hotel; "how in the world did you get so black?" "Why, look a here, massa, the reason am—de day dis chile was born there was an eclipse."

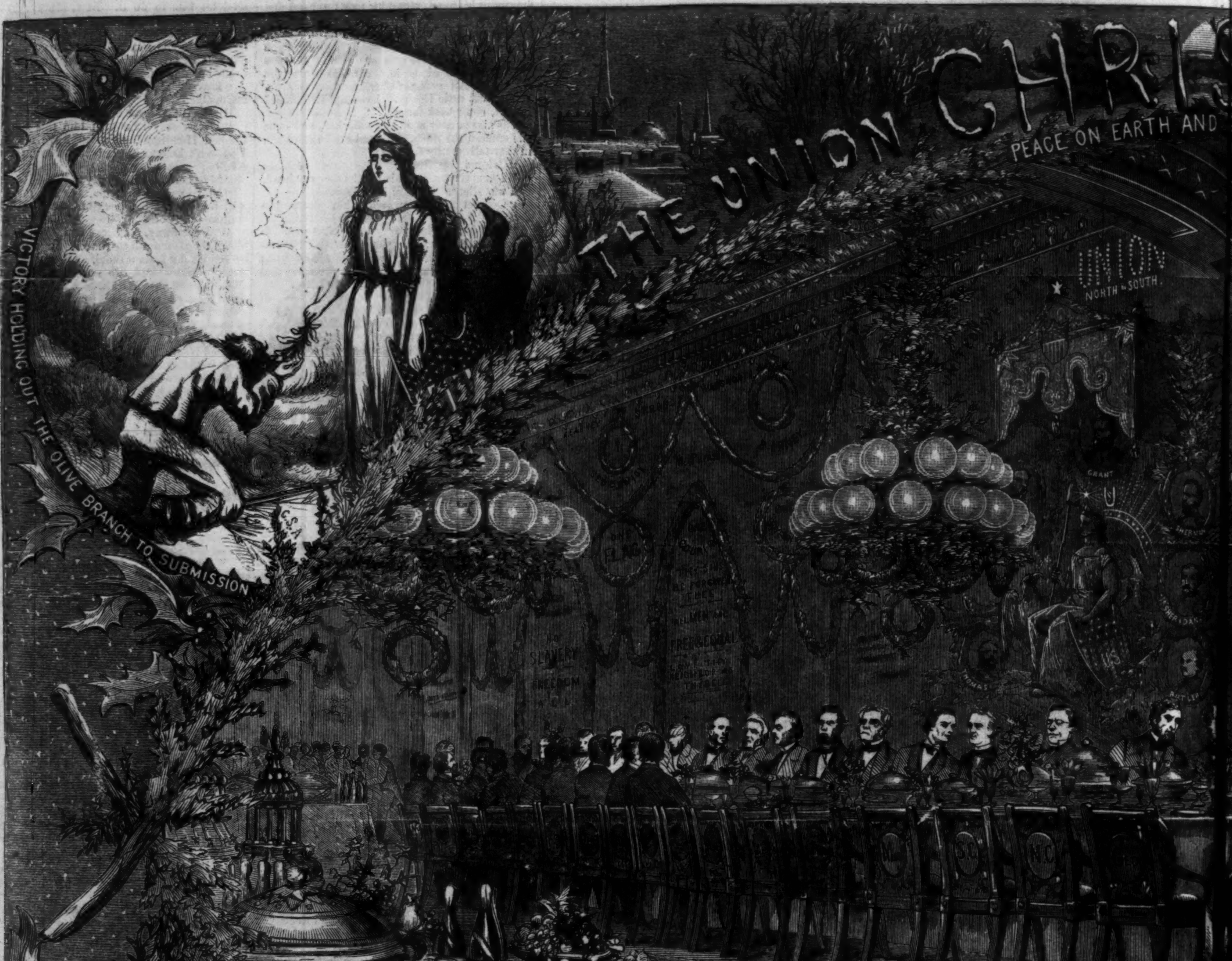
"My son," said Spriggles senior to Spriggles junior, thinking to enlighten the boy on the propagation of the hen species, "my son, do you know that chickens come out of eggs?" "Do they?" said Spriggles, "I thought eggs came out of chickens." Thus ended the first lesson.

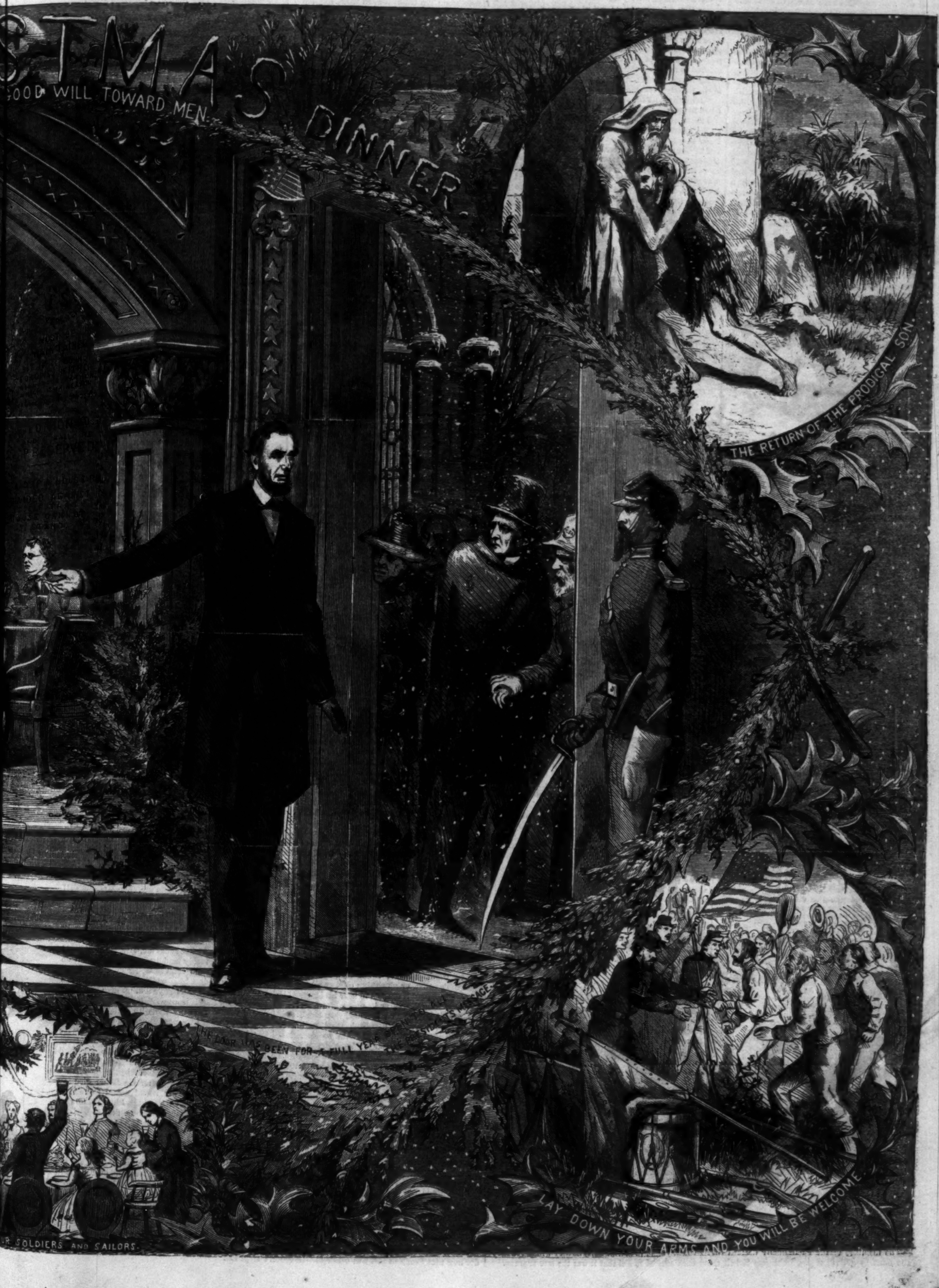
How exhilarating it is to be suddenly lodged in a prison cell for the night, and released the following morning with the comforting reply to your inquiry, "You are the wrong man."

Why is slavery like an over-boiled egg?—Because its *yoke* is hard.

In an action, lately, Mr. James said it was a lamentable thing to see "two tailors in the same suit."

Hew a couple of infant statues out of a log, if you would have a representation of "the babes in the wood."


THE UNION CHRIS
PEACE ON EARTH AND GO
VICTORY HOLDING OUT THE OLIVE BRANCH TO SUBMISSION
C.S.A.
UNION
NORTH & SOUTH.
GRANT
SHERMAN
SHERIDAN
THOMAS
BUTLER
ONE FLAG
NO SLAVERY
FREEDOM TO ALL
FREE & EQUAL
U.S.
N.C.
S.C.
UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER
THE HOME TOAST—GOD BLE


STMAS
GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.
DINNER.
THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON.
THE DOOR HAS BEEN FOR A FULL YEAR OPEN TO ALL — THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.
UR SOLDIERS AND SAILORS.
LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS AND YOU WILL BE WELCOME.

THE CHRISTMAS SOLO.

THE Christmas of 1863 is so fresh in the memory of all who may read this little narrative that some of them will at once recall the incidents which, under the slight veil of a change of names of persons and places, I shall now relate.

In the rural districts of this country, the Christmas holiday is not generally as much observed as in the city; but our little village of Ralford numbered among its inhabitants so many city people that it retained many metropolitan customs, and one of these was the celebration of Christmas with a degree of fervor which could hardly be surpassed even in a Roman Catholic town of Italy.

Our choir, as is the custom in most Episcopal churches in country-places, depended chiefly for its vitality upon the assistance of ladies. A lady—Miss Snow by name—Ella Snow, if I remember aright—played the little organ, and another lady—Matilda Ann Wragg—acted as choir leader and first soprano. This Matilda Ann Wragg was a daughter of Rev. Amos Wragg, who had been rector of the parish ever so long ago. He had been superannuated some fifteen years since, and his only child, Matilda Ann, lived with him in his old house near the church, another parsonage having been built for the new incumbent, Mr. Watkins.

Matilda Ann Wragg had never been married; and as she had long since passed the bloom of youth she was necessarily an old maid. I must say, too, that she was very much like the typical old maids who are caricatured in ill-natured valentines; for she was tall, and gaunt, and skinny, and had fishy-gray eyes and a sharp nose inclining to red. She had, moreover, a very glib tongue, with the use of which she was well acquainted, while I am afraid that she knew perfectly well how to quarrel with any body who came in her way. I well remember once applying to this lady a verse of Scripture, slightly altered to suit the occasion: "Who hath babbling? who hath contention? who hath redness of nose?" To which the reply naturally enough was, "Miss Matilda Ann Wragg."

In the choir Miss Wragg was complete despot. Not even the new minister, a weak, pale little man, fresh from a theological seminary, presumed to question her taste or judgment; and I verily believe he lived in mortal dread lest she should suddenly pounce upon him like a jaguar and marry him against his will. Any way, he was very docile, and always referred all musical matters to the lady in question.

Miss Wragg, I should think, had been in years long gone by a fair singer; but now her voice had assumed a sharp, cutting tone that seemed to harmonize, however unpleasant the combination might have been, with her vinegar-like aspect. She was very fond of high tunes, and was never satisfied unless she had at least two F's and one G above the staff in each Sunday service. She was telling enough on these high notes, but her middle register was so weak as to be almost inaudible. She never missed a Sunday at church, was very exemplary and devout in her deportment, and when she kneeled during prayers spread her skirts so that she took up nearly the whole organ-loft, leaving the other members of the choir pinned up against the margin, with scarcely room enough to breathe or cough; a sneeze would certainly have been out of the question.

Last Christmas our little church of St. Epaphroditus (see Philippians iv. 23) made unusual preparations for the celebration of the Blessed Day. The choir had procured a new anthem from New York—it was that in E flat major, by Popkins, Op. 127½—and a High Church clergyman of Hoboken had sent a *Te Deum*, composed by himself, which contained an elaborate solo for Miss Wragg. Besides all this our little rector, Mr. Watkins, had written a Christmas Carol, which the Sunday-school scholars were to sing in chorus to a tune something between a march and a bacchanalian song, after the fashion so much in vogue nowadays. The words were as follows:

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

On this glorious Christmas morn
Loud we chant a holy lay,
For our Saviour Christ was born
On this happy Christmas-day.
In the manger,
Heavenly stranger,
Thou wast born
This blessèd day.

While the shepherds on the plain
Watched for fear their flocks would stray,
Angels sang the glorious strain,
"Jesus Christ is born to-day."
In the manger,
Heavenly stranger,
Wast thou born
This blessèd day.

Soon the Wise Men from afar
Journeyed on their weary way,
Guided by a radiant star,
To the place where Jesus lay—
To the manger,
Where the stranger,
Where the infant
Jesus lay.

Men and angels thus adore
Him, to whom we sing and pray;
And to Him should we the more
Ceaseless love and homage pay.
To the stranger
In the manger,
Who was born
On Christmas-day.

The choir at rehearsal were very cool to Miss Wragg. There had, indeed, existed for some time, smouldering under the ashes of habitual and conventional respect, a genuine disaffection against her sway; and of late her voice had so palpably deteriorated that this dissatisfaction was but natural. Her solo in the *Te Deum* was painful to listen to. Sharp, shaky, and uncertain, her thin, querulous voice, sadly out of tune, grated upon the ears of the most unmusical; but she was firm in her determination to sing, and directed the rehearsals with more than her usual abrupt acerbity. Perhaps she was dimly aware that she was not listened to with pleasure, and that her powers were failing.

The members of the choir finally decided that she must be got rid of; but who was to bell the cat? Miss Ella Snow, as the organist and as one entitled to have some little authority, was at last persuaded to suggest, in a most humble way:

"Miss Wragg, don't you think it would be better for Miss Johnson or the tenor to take the solo?"

Miss Wragg darted a sudden suspicious glance around the choir, and the guilty singers—for they were all in the conspiracy—shrank up closer to the margin of the organ-loft, as if expecting a biting reply or an abrupt dissent; but they were almost touched to note that the next moment the features of the soprano assumed an expression of real pain as she timidly answered:

"It's written for the soprano, Miss Snow. I think I had better try it."

The basso here blurted out that Miss Wragg ought to let Miss Johnson sing it, for she at least knew how to sing in tune. It was an uncivil remark; but the other members of the choir were emboldened by it, and the tenor himself said, rather more gallantly, it is true, that while Miss Wragg was suffering with her severe cold perhaps it would be better, after all, for Miss Johnson to take the solo—if, indeed, he casually added, it were not better to let the tenor sing it.

Now Miss Wragg had no cold at all. She knew it, and she knew that all the choir knew it too. She said, in a tone decisive, to be sure, yet mild enough for her:

"I think, ladies and gentlemen, that *I* will take the solo this time." And she added, in an absent, melancholy way: "This time at least—this time."

No reply was made, and the rehearsal closed in a moody, sullen manner enough to all concerned. The singers, instead of going home, however, went to the rector's house, and officially informed that perturbed clergyman that if Miss Wragg was to sing in that choir on Christmas-day she must sing alone. Miss Johnson corroborated this view of the case, and even the gentle Ella Snow declared that she would not play the organ any longer for Matilda Ann Wragg, even if she was poor old Parson Wragg's daughter.

Poor Mr. Watkins was frightened nearly out of his wits; but he was spurred on by his choir, by his desire to have good music on Christmas-day, and by a vague sense of relief which even the mere prospect of Miss Wragg's downfall afforded him. Yet, after all, she was a good and useful lady. He knew better than any other that under that sharp acerbity of manner, under that unprepossessing exterior, there lay a moral strength which kept alive some of the most useful charities of his parish. He knew that when an utterly unpleasant, dirty, shabby, poor family were in distress and poverty, Matilda Ann Wragg was the first to visit them; and he could not forget that only the last week, when he opened the door of poor old Dame Watson's little house by the river, he noticed that the room was neatly swept up, a cheerful fire was blazing on the hearth, a bowl of chicken soup was warming beside it, and a gentle voice was reading these words of David:

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."

"My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

He had to look at the reader before he would have recognized Matilda Ann Wragg in that voice.

So Mr. Watkins was disposed to deprecate any action on the part of his choir; but then he remembered that one of his old professors from the Theological Seminary—a man, too, of musical taste—was to spend Christmas with him; and what would this Mr. Grundy think of the high G of Miss Wragg? It was too much; and reluctantly he consented to write a note to the lady, courteously but decidedly telling her that the interests of his parish would be subserved by her kind withdrawal for the present from the choir. Of course there were thanks for past services, in which the members of his congregation, he knew, heartily joined, etc., etc.

Poor Miss Wragg! When she had said in the choir that she would like to sing "only this time" there was a meaning in the phrase which none but herself knew, and a further significance which not even she dreamed of. But even this last song was denied her. She had, however, too much personal dignity, as well as too great a respect for the pastoral office, to venture to revisit the choir after the rector's note. For the first time for many evenings there was no light twinkling through the windows of the little front-parlor of old Parson Wragg's house, and the antique, many-legged piano-forte was as silent as the quavering voice of the ex-soprano. But had you looked in the little back-room where Parson Wragg lay bedridden, you might have seen the attenuated form of the disappointed old maid bending against the table with her face buried in her hands.

It was Christmas-eve, and busy youths and maidens were at work trimming the church with greens. The choir was practicing away at a great rate in the organ-loft, the clear soprano of Jane Johnson reaching the high G squarely and tunefully. Yet there was trouble somewhere; for the little band of singers had been so used to the systematic, if despotic, management of Miss Wragg that liberty had degenerated into anarchy, and more than half the rehearsal-time was spent in arguing little points which the ex-soprano would have decided by a word. They also felt a vague distrust of themselves and of their recent actions, as if, after all, they had been rather severe on the fallen potentate whom they did not name at all, but thought of inwardly as "that poor Matilda Ann Wragg."

Suddenly there was a movement of surprise in the body of the church. The young men dropped their festoons of ivy and the girls their wreaths of evergreen; and listening, the choir heard the exclamation, repeated by several voices,

"Drowned!"

"Drowned just below the milldam. They saw the body near the shore, and Roberts, the miller, secured it."

Who was it? whispered the members of the choir to each other in alarm. But as they whispered they each seemed to feel that it was the late soprano.

"She had been to Widow Watson's with a basket of victuals," continued the relator of the news in the body of the church, "and Mr. Walters from Smith's Corners saw it all. He says she was walking slowly along the bank, toward dusk, singing. The wind was blowing toward him, and he could hear the words. He says they were from the *Te Deum*: 'When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst humble Thyself to be born of a virgin.'"

Each member of the listening choir felt a sudden thrill of pain. These were the words of the soprano solo.

"She walked on," said the man, "to near the highest part of the bank, just above the bridge, when her foot slipped and she fell over the ledge. Walters says she gave a scream and tried to save herself by clinging to the edge as she fell, but there was nothing to grasp hold of, and soon she was out of sight. The current swept her away, and when Walters and Roberts saw her floating down by the mill it was too late."

The appalled group at the church after this intelligence put up the greens quickly, though sadly, and there was no more rehearsing by the choir. An event so unusual was startling enough to the people of a quiet country village.

Christmas of last year came on a Friday, and on the Sunday following the funeral of Miss Wragg took place in the little church. Many came who had never been there before. The High Church minister from Hoboken was there; but besides him there were many poor people from the factory town near Ralford, and they all had a kind regretful word and a parting tear for "the parson's daughter," who, cross as she looked, was always so ready to come to them when they were sick or in misery; and the people of the village, where she had lived so long unappreciated, began to doubt whether they had ever really known the old maid. Had they not entertained an angel unawares?

The members of the choir agreed among themselves to take care of the dead lady's peculiar charge, the old Widow Watson; and Jane Johnson and Ella Snow went to see the poor old creature the very night of the funeral. She was garrulous enough in her sorrow: and, not knowing how the unconscious rebuke entered the souls of her hearers, she told them how Miss Wragg had talked to her about the choir; and how she had said she now knew that her voice was harsh and thin; and how she had meant to give way to younger and better singers, but wanted to sing *so much* on that Christmas-day, for she said it was twenty years that very Christmas since—; and then she burst into tears.

Old Mrs. Watson further said that, after a few moments, Miss Wragg took from her bosom a locket and showed to her a portrait. "I knowed who it was," added the talkative old woman—"it was the young clergyman of Ralford—a helper to Parson Wragg—who was drowned at New York twenty years ago or more. But I never supposed before that he was any thing to Matilda Ann—I *never* would have guessed it for a moment. Well, well, after all, I knowed her better than any of you."

Do we *really* know *any* of those whom we meet day by day? Or are there others near us now, under whose outward mannerisms lie hidden the love, the sorrow, the tragedy, the "beauty of holiness" which made our poor soprano one of those who will be His in the day when He shall make up His jewels?

MRS. BUSWELL'S CHRISTMAS.

BY HARRIET E. PRESCOTT.

THE happy mother of three sons three years ago. All given to their country. For when the boys came in to her, all on fire with the spirit that was breathed in from the very atmosphere of those days, she too was on fire, and would have helped them strap on their knapsacks had she been needed at the work. As it was, she knit their socks and marked their Bibles, and sent them off, stout-hearted, with a dry eye.

The eye was not so dry one summer day not long after, the day of M'Dowell's Bull Run—two of the boys never rose from that battle-field. Still she was a proud mother; she had given her best, her uttermost, all to preserve this cherished name of country. It went far to console her.

And there was Frank left. What a boy he was now, to be sure! How ardent, how heroic, how tender, how compassionate! What an eye he had, clear-gray and black-lashed, looking straight through you! What a brow! Such a noble, broad bend as the brown hair took across it! There was something in just that one lock of bright hair and the innocent, childlike way of its falling that must appeal to every woman's heart; it had long ago to Nelly Sanderson's—that, or something else, or all together. And the good it did you to hear his laugh—his laugh that seemed to carry its racy warmth through your very heart as you listened. A handsome, cheery boy; brave as beautiful, good as brave. Blessed are the pure in heart! And so Mrs. Buswell's thoughts kept running. That Frank would be spared to her seemed to her mind as certain as that Christmas-day would come. Frank was to be with her on Christmas-day—that was all arranged; then he was to tell her about Will and Jack—their last words, their last deeds, their last looks—the two boys whom she had watched from childhood into manhood, and who in these three years had grown back again to be as tender memories as the babies lost long before, when she herself was young.

Then, all told, Nelly Sanderson would come in and sit beside him, and look across to her for admiring sympathy in every thing he said and every thing he did; and perhaps—who knew?—Frank had promise of promotion—before he went back to the cruel war again, he would leave Nelly with her to stay forever her own daughter; for Frank and Nelly had their private understanding, into which, though she knew about it, she had never obtruded herself.

How eagerly Mrs. Buswell set her house in order now that Frank at last was coming! In order it always was; she had to displace every thing that she might put all to rights afresh, and satisfy herself. The britannia shone, the china sparkled, and the linen was like a smooth snow-drift. And such pies as there were in the pantry; puffs and patties, jelly-tarts, each one a picture in crimson and snow; a great brawn; the cold ducks brown from the spit and, down cellar, to-morrow's great turkey fairly asking to be basted! Mrs. Buswell smoothed down her apron in complacency, and betook herself to his bedroom. Every thing there so white and sweet; the bed a refreshment to tired limbs to look at—very like he couldn't sleep in it, he'd gotten himself so accustomed to hardship; the toilet-covers dazzling; the prayer-book open at the Thanksgiving service; and the flowers that Nelly Sanderson had brought in—a cluster of red-hearted roses—all blooming in the white vase, for the room was just warmed from the next one. Mrs. Buswell went and hid her face in the pillow where her boy's head would lie that night. Perhaps she was ashamed that even the empty room and the walls—bare save for the slips of engravings the boy had pinned up there from the weeklies—ashamed that they should see the smile that kept growing broader and broader upon it, till, from sheer happiness, it was nothing but a smothered laugh. Yet, when she raised her head the place was wet, after all, with tears.

It was well for Mrs. Buswell that in that happy moment she touched the fountain of tears; perhaps it saved poor heart and brain much racking. She had need of all her tears when, at some noise in the other room, she went in and found the rector there awaiting her. It gave a single plunge, and then her heart became like a stone in her body at once. She knew what his entrance in that way meant even before he turned his sad, quiet face, accustomed to such errands, upon her. For a moment every thing grew black and swam before her; she staggered to a seat. "Oh, Sir!" she dryly sobbed, with her hands outstretched, "you needn't tell me. I know it now. My boy's with his brothers!"

That was indeed what the rector had come to tell her. Of all his company going gayly into the engagement but ten had come out alive, and he was not among them. And since no words were there which would avail for consolation, the minister of Heaven knelt beside her and offered up his own heart, and tried to lift hers with it in prayer. But Mrs. Buswell's heart was too heavy to be dragged from its depths. Frank was to have been here to-night, sitting where she sat at this moment, and now the place was empty, empty as a grave. Oh, but his grave was full, full and heaped, in that black place his dear white suffering face—the little baby once that had slept on her bosom—and far away from those two other graves—gone, lost! Oh, all her blossoms fallen, and the thorny old stem left! And Mrs. Buswell broke into a storm of sobs and tears, till, in the midst of them all, she remembered Nelly, the orphan Nelly, her dead boy's sweet-heart. "He was all she had," said Mrs. Buswell. "Oh! he was all I had, too!"

So Nelly was sent for, and, all unsuspiciously and happily, full of rosiest expectation and pleasure, came over. Once every moment had brought with it a fear, but now had not Providence itself hushed idle apprehension in sending them Frank's own promise that he would be with them on Christmas-day?

Mrs. Buswell, feeling the work before her, had tried to dry her face and to compose herself for a brief while. She called Nelly in a trembling voice from Frank's room. And without knowing why, Nelly trembled in unison. Then, as gently as speech could do it, the mother essayed to break the matter to her, till, hurriedly, finding it beyond her own strength, she flung her arms about her and begged the girl to comfort her, for she should never see Frank any more. And far from comforting her, as she hung upon her there, under the potency of that terrible word never, the girl seemed slowly growing into a petrifaction herself, and though Mrs. Buswell helped her to the bed, and rubbed her face and her hands with a will, she uttered neither word nor groan, only looked at her with wide-open woeful eyes. And Mrs. Buswell endeavored to repeat to her all that the good rector had said to herself, for though at the moment she had seemed to pay it no heed, it had printed itself deep into her heart as a picture might be stamped upon a plate left in the camera uncovered by its black face-cloth. And when it appeared to be of no use, then Mrs. Buswell gave way to her own grief again, and it seemed to her roused and terrified apprehension that now she would lose Nelly also. "Oh, that was because I was so ungrateful and said I had nothing left!" wept she.

"You need not fret about me, Mrs. Buswell," said Nelly at last, feebly and brokenly. "I shall do better soon. I am content God should have him; he lent him to us a long while. All the bitterness was when he went. I gave him up then. Only it seems—now that it is all confirmed—to take the life out of me, to take my life with it. Besides, you know we thought we were expecting him."

"I *did* expect him!" sobbed Mrs. Buswell. "He was going to tell me all about my Will and Jack. And now I never shall know. And I never shall know about him either, how it was, or when. Oh! with his head in the black earth, the dear curly head that many a night after his father died lay here and nestled in my neck! And there's his stocking, the one that Nelly knit, I hung it up that he might see it and laugh when he first opened the door, with its turnover in it, and its bunch of raisins, and its penknife and all. Oh! how can I ever take it down? Oh! the Christmases we used to have, with the little white night-gowns and the bare feet pattering about the floor at daybreak. Oh, they're all gone!—I thought we'd have them over again in Frank's children. But now—" And lying down beside Nelly, and drawing some clothes up over them, Mrs. Buswell lay sighing and complaining, weeping and praying by turns, till from the exhaustion occasioned by her grief she slept, and Nelly, to whom, in an alarm at the great wide-open eyes, she had first administered an opiate, at last slept too.

Perhaps there is nothing in the world like that first awakening after any sudden sorrow. One has the whole blow over again, and that at an instant before the faculties are fully equal to the shock. Nelly did not wake. Mrs. Buswell sat up shivering on the outside of the bed, piled some blankets over her yet unconscious companion, slipped off and away to kindle the fire and be where again she might know the wild abandonment to tears and cries without disturbing any soul to be her witness, for with time comes reserve. But by-and-by, when, feeling as if such vehement misery were wrong, she bestirred herself once more about the place, every thing seemed made to stab her. All the gathered goods in her pantry cruelly smote the good housewife's soul; there would be plenty of Christmas-beggars though before noon to divide it with; she could send her turkey, too, to some mother whose son *had* come home, some mother whom Heaven had not stripped of every thing, and her heart grew hard and angry. She took her lonesome cup of tea—for Nelly still slept as she had lain down in her clothes on the outside of the bed—and she made it bitter with her tears. Then with the ineffaceable instinct of her kind, she swept and scoured all bright and clean again, as if it were necessary for her to contrast every outside brilliancy with the darkness of her spirit within. There still hung the stocking from the mantle-shelf, filled, as she had said, with all the reminiscences of his boyhood, filled too with dainty nicknacks of Nelly's needle-work, such things as are never vouchsafed to any one's boyhood; what a happy scene of laughing and caressing she had pictured to herself when he should have taken it down and be emptying its contents on his awkward knees. Now those dead hands would never lighten it; she had not the heart to take it down herself. Walking to and fro, she went to the window, perhaps attracted by the whistle of the express-train rattling over the bridge; all was such clear crystalline weather outside, from such a throne of azure the sun was scattering his golden shafts, such fine and dazzling crust of snow, such white and driven drifts along the fields, all was so pure, so bright, so fresh, and in the midst the glad church bells began to ring out their burden of blessing and rejoicing. Mrs. Buswell turned away and went again into the inner room; and there, as the prayer-book caught her glance, still open as on yesterday, something bent her knee and her spirit, and she kneeled, repeating the words before her till unable to see them for the fast-falling showers of warm tears anew, she found it in her heart at last to thank God with words of her own that he had taken her darlings from the toils and trials of earth to Himself.

And as she still knelt there, her head bowed upon the page, she heard the outer door open and shut with a quick slam. She paid it no attention. Then the handle of the inner door turned, and there came a foot upon the floor. It was some neighbor to see if she wanted a good turn, she said vaguely to herself—but in a moment, as the foot crossed and drew nearer—*that* a neighbor's step? Never! What had happened? Was the earth quaking and shaking and rolling away from under her feet! Had the heavens fallen, and had she caught Frank again, or was it he, the great brown fellow, the stalwart bearded hero of a hundred fights, who had caught her and tossed her in his arms and kissed her face all over from crown to cap-sheaf as if she were the child and not he? And Mrs. Buswell, all herself again, returned the saucy intruder a round box on the ear for the daring deed, and then kissed the place twenty times to pay for it, so soon as it came her turn for kissing; and as suddenly, to make the round of her alternations complete, burst into tears, such different tears from all the rest she had shed, and wiped them away with his neckerchief. Then something told Frank that mother and son were not alone in the room; he looked anxiously, uncertainly about; and, under the blankets piled above her, Nelly stirred, moaning gently in her sleep. In a breath he was beside her. "Softly! softly!" said good Mrs. Buswell, "don't let her be shocked; besides, she had an opiate, and she'll be ill." But in the instant that Frank lingered there above her, his soul in his eyes, the moan ceased, as if his mere presence had charmed it away, the features grew quiet, then changed into calm smiling, and a long sigh of relief parted the lips while the eyelids fluttered and opened and the glance rested on him. Mrs. Buswell shoved him aside, round the corner of the wardrobe.

"Nelly," said she, "we've had a terrible nightmare, you and I. We dreamed Frank was killed, dear—that the minister said so. But, thank God! it was only a dream. Here, child, drink this Seltzer water. There! that's a good girl. Now, do you think you can bear it? Will you be quiet if I tell you something—if I tell you that—"

But Nelly was not listening to a word she said. She was sitting up, supported by one hand, and the dark eyes were peering round the corner of the wardrobe, and in a moment more she had sprung and was in Frank's arms.

I meant to have told you about Mrs. Buswell's Christmas. But somehow it has all turned into what happened the day before Mrs. Buswell's Christmas. As for the Christmas itself, it would have been like all the other Christmases of Christendom, if at every other hearth the grave had given up the dead to make its glory and its grace complete. Nelly and Frank must go to church; there was nothing for it but that. Mrs. Buswell must stay at home to cook such a dinner as never table groaned under in that house before; to get out the great copper and boil the plum-pudding in it—for without you tasted of plum-pudding and mince-pie on Christmas-day, farewell luck for all the year! to baste that turkey as if it had been a thank-offering. And then when Nelly came home she was to wash the celery, and Frank was to help her; and it took them more time to do it than it had taken Mrs. Buswell to dress the whole dinner, and to crack the beautifully-segmented oil-nuts into the bargain. And such baskets as she made ready for Frank and Nelly to take round to all the poor folk of their ken. And then in Mrs. Buswell's busy brain another plan took life and shape. Why, pray, should not all their pleasure be completed at once? Why should not joy come in an avalanche as well as a dribblet? Why should she not make sure of Nelly for her daughter now—orphan Nelly, who had no one but herself to consult in the matter? Why should not Frank know a brief bit of the comfort of married life and a home of his own before he returned to winter-quarters, and hard tack, and hard knocks again? Why would not Christmas-day do for a wedding-day? With all of which catechism, finding no satisfactory replies herself, she breathlessly assailed the two, from a burning face, on their return. And it seemed that the same idea had already been broached, and discussed, and pleaded by Frank; and before dinner was brought on he stepped out to secure the same minister who had given consolation to his mother yesterday to give a little to himself and Nelly this afternoon. A gay dinner the three made, with a wooden chair and a plate in it, brought in for tiny little Schwartz, who had gone through the war with Frank, to fill the fourth side of the table. And Frank took down his new stocking and emptied it on the table after dessert, every thing in it reminding him of some history in the past, and insisting, when all that was done, upon helping his mother and Nelly wash up the dishes, making infinitely more work than he gave assistance, keeping them all hanging, till the water was cold and had to be replenished, over the countless recitals he had to tell of breathless dangers, and of the last escape of all, when, being taken prisoner in the desperate engagement, he had broken jail, and, reporting himself, had come North on his promised furlough. And then, if they were not so gay, never was there a happier group than that which quietly sat about the fire, after the clergyman had come and gone, in the red, early sunset—the blissful mother beaming on her children, yet with a tender thought for all those sorrowful mothers whose dear ones came back no more, the young husband and wife side by side in the growing shadows. And the fire-light danced on the wall, and the stars came out in the clear, keen heavens, and God's blessing seemed to brood wide-winged over the whole earth on that happy Christmas night.

MY CHRISTMAS.

I'm a physician, and my name is Robert Jervis. Most of the fellows at the club call me Dr. Bob—probably because my hair is always short—bobbed off, you know.

I have a wife and four innocent children. Doctors always have children; they are not so much of a luxury to them as to serve other people. I call my children innocents, and so they are, though now and then they *do* play the very deuce with my medicines; but then that shows a commendable spirit of research and inquiry. Mrs. Jervis says it is mischief. When young Bob one day gave the cat a blue-pill, she went so far as to say that it was a piece of downright cruelty; but I assured her that it was only an experiment illustrating his inclination toward his father's profession, and that, for my part, I didn't care if he physicked all the cats in town if thereby he qualified himself for usefulness in the walks of medicine, which his father so adorned! I have noticed since then that we have no cats in our house; either my logic or Bob's experiment was successful.

There are some people in my line who never take time to enjoy a holiday. I'm not one of that sort. I believe Christmas, for instance, was meant for me as much as for other men, and I try always to enjoy it in a rational way. And that brings me to my story.

One year ago I had a memorable Christmas experience.. Rather, I had a memorable Christmas-eve. Sitting in my cozy parlor, with my wife at my elbow, chatting with her of the morrow, there came a sudden ring of the door-bell, sharp, quick, decisive. Who was sick now?

Biddy thrust in her head at the door:

"Mrs. Jones's little boy, Sir, says his sister's very sick, and you're wanted to come right over, Sir."

Who was Mrs. Jones? I had a tolerably large circle of acquaintance. I knew any quantity of Smiths, a host of Browns, but not a single Jones. And what if I did? Was I bound to leave my comfortable nest on Christmas-eve to serve a family I had never heard of—to administer rhubarb and ipecac to some youngster needing, more than any thing else, perhaps, to be let alone? There, right before me, hanging in a row, were four stockings representing four pairs of little feet now snugly ensconced under coverlet and blanket—stockings which wife and I had promised ourselves all sorts of amusement and satisfaction in filling in the name of Santa Claus. Must I abandon that pleasure, and plunge out into the driving snow, maybe on a fool's errand? Couldn't I have *one* night to myself?

"Please, Sir, the lad says his sister's *very* sick, and won't you come right away?"

It was Biddy's voice, and it roused me to the actual "situation." Perhaps my little girls would have a merrier Christmas, I thought to myself, if I answered this call of the little stranger.

I went.

It was a cold, dismal, barren place to which the thinly-clad shivering boy led me. An old, rambling house, with broken windows, creaking doors, and cold and want every where. Nor was that the worst. In the one main room into which the whole family appeared to be crowded, a drunken, ragged wretch lay in a heavy sleep upon the floor, while over the little bed a pale, wan-faced woman leaned with despair in her eyes, thre half-clothed children, with hunger in their faces, clutching her skirts, clamoring for bread. And on that little bed, moaning and gasping, lay a child with as sweet a face as ever angel wore—a child whose little life seemed nearly ended.

It was a pronounced case of scarlet-fever, the scourge of childhood. The disease seemed to have been running its course rapidly; a few hours must decide the fate of the sufferer. I was not slow in meeting the emergency, employing all my skill, feeling the time to be short. Meanwhile the mother cried and prayed by turns, the children crouching around her.

"God be merciful!" she said, again and again; sometimes adding, "Save her, doctor, save her!"

Then, after a while, winning her gradually from herself, she told me her story; how, once a happy household, intemperance in the husband and father had brought them to want and misery; how already one child had gone to Potter's Field because of hunger unsatisfied; how Tom, the oldest boy, was at sea, but was expected home every day.

"He wrote that he'd be here on Christmas, Sir, and that he'd bring his pockets full of presents for the children. They've all been dreaming about it ever since; and Mary—that's the name of the sick one, Sir, and she's his favorite—talks about him in her—"

"Why don't he come?" It was a weak voice that spoke, the sufferer was delirious again. "He promised me a doll, and I'm tired of waiting. *Won't* you tell him to hurry?" Then, a moment after, "Did you hear the angel, mother? It was a bright angel, and sang so very sweetly, 'Come with me, come with me, Mary!' I want to go, mother. But what will Tom say? He'll want to kiss me; and who'll take care of the doll?" For a moment all was still. Then we heard,

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep."

I'm an old doctor, and I'm used to strange scenes, but *that* was too much for me. As for the mother, she fell right down in a paroxysm of grief, and all the shivering little ones cried as if their hearts would break. Only the drunken brute in the corner was unmoved.

"Oh, if Tom was only here," at last the mother moaned, "maybe he could do something for her!"

"Only God can help her now," I answered. What would the fellows at the club have thought if they had heard me say that? I, the hard-shell, impervious Dr. Bob! Presently I added,

"She has suffered for want of nourishment, Mrs. Jones, but that may prove a blessing in the end. It will leave the fever less to prey upon. But she is *very* sick, Mrs. Jones."

Just then a strong step was heard in the passage.

"It's Tom! it's Tom!"

It *was* Tom—a strong, noble, brown-faced boy, still on the sunny side of twenty, with a frank, open look, that won you in a moment.

"Mother!" "Tom!" and they were folded in a close embrace.

Then looking around—resting his glance for a second only on the sleeping sot—he seemed to comprehend at once all the misery of the hour and the place. At the sight of Mary's face, lying on the rumpled pillow, I saw him start, while the shadow of a great fear seemed to settle upon him.

"Have I come home to find death here before me?"

He turned to me imploringly.

"Death is every where," I answered; "but while there is life there is hope."

"And I had my trunk full of gifts for the darling!"

"Has Tom come? Why don't you hurry home, Tom? It is getting dark, and I want to kiss you before I go to sleep!"

Poor Tom! There was no welcome in the voice he longed to hear—no recognition—only weary complaint. Would she indeed go away into the dark, leaving no good-by behind for the brother come home from the seas?

The hours slipped on. Crouching down in a corner the children fell asleep. The mother, worn and exhausted, laid her head on Tom's broad shoulders and wept herself into unconsciousness. So, sitting silently, he and I watched beside the bed. At intervals the sick one murmured his name in her delirium; and I could hear him whispering to himself, "Spare—spare her, Lord!" So the night passed on.

Just as the dawn touched the roofs, standing over the little sufferer, I saw her eyes open with a calm, natural look, and presently heard the word,

"Mother?"

Thank God! She was safe. The crisis had passed. She would live.

"Tom is here," I said, bending my lips close to hers.

Oh the glad look that came into her eyes as, obedient to my call, he bowed his head over her pillow! From the very borders of the River of Death she had come back to greet the dear wanderer, sighing and praying for her return.

At the breakfast-table, on Christmas morning, I told the story of the night to my happy household. I think young Bob was astonished at seeing tears in my eyes; but I couldn't recite my narrative without feeling more tenderly than was my wont. Mrs. Dr. Bob cried like a booby; and, for that matter, so did all the rest. But very soon it was clear sky again in our faces. Then I made a suggestion.

Not long after, that suggestion being concurred in by the family conference, a procession filed out from the kitchen of Dr. Robert Jervis, No. 2019 Grand Street, and marched courageously toward 69 Dark Lane. At the head of said procession marched Dr. Bob himself, bearing a huge basket of provisions; behind him came Mrs. Dr. Bob with another basket, heaped with clean linen and dainties adapted to the palate of an invalid, while still behind marched all the little Jervises, each loaded with a basket, pail, or package, Biddy bringing up the rear with a turkey "browned to a turn." Down Grand Street, up Dark Lane, straight to the door of the Jones's, the procession marched; through the door it pressed unfalteringly, each basket being finally placed on the plain table where Mrs. Jones's weary head was leaning, with Tom's hand smoothing her matted hair. Then, while the junior Jervises marched homeward again, we unpacked our stores, spread a bountiful repast, and summoning all to partake, ourselves "served at table"—the poor mother crying and eating by turns, while Tom saluted each mouthful with a smile and a blessing on the donors.

Then Tom's Christmas presents were distributed—Mrs. Dr. Bob read a psalm from an old Bible which Mrs. Jones produced from her pocket; Tom said a word of prayer; and we went home—home to our happy children, with hearts full of joy and thanksgiving to the Father of us all.

That was my last and my happiest Christmas; and I have not told my story in vain if it has suggested to any that there is nothing which gives so sweet a flavor to our own Christmas cheer as a kind action done for any of God's poor, in the name of Him whose birth was like the rising of a great Hope to a world astray.

THE ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND.

Nashville, the present head-quarters of the Army of the Cumberland, is situated on the south bank of the Cumberland River, which, in this section of its course, runs nearly east and west. The "Rock City," as it is called, had before the war a population of from fifteen to twenty thousand. Its site consists of an entire rock, and at various heights is elevated from 70 to 175 feet above the river. Upon the highest point, Capitol Hill, the State House is built. As soon as the State authorities had carried the State over to secession the Common Council appropriated seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars to build a residence for President Davis, as an inducement to remove the rebel capital from Richmond to their city. As a consequence of the fall of Fort Donelson Nashville was evacuated by the rebels February 17, 1862. Fort Donelson had been captured on the previous day, which was Sunday. Early that morning Governor Harris had received from Floyd the most flattering news: according to the dispatch Grant's army had been defeated, and the siege of the fort had been raised. The inhabitants were assembled in the churches, and were giving thanks for a great victory when the whole city was thrown into a tumult by the appearance of the excited Governor galloping through the streets proclaiming that Donelson had fallen, and that Grant was coming to Nashville. The confusion was indescribable; and in the disorder gangs of plunderers, taking advantage of the panic of the citizens, had every thing their own way. It was not until a week after that Buell's advance entered the city and took possession. Governor Andrew Johnson soon after arrived and assumed control of the State as military Governor.

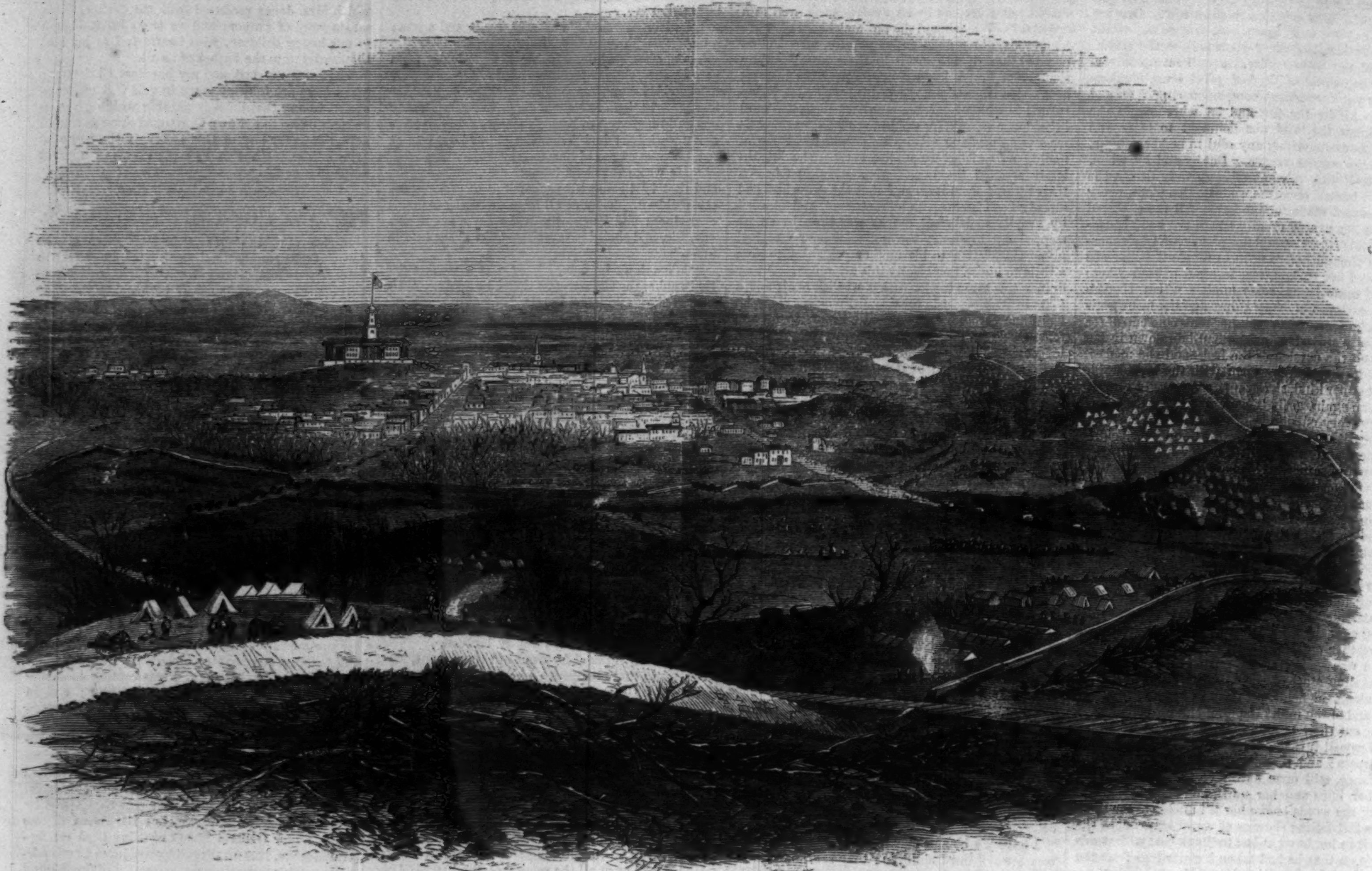
In September, 1862, the city was threatened by General Bragg's advance, but the Army of the Ohio, under General Buell, having been concentrated there, Bragg slipped by and moved on Louisville. This necessitated the removal of the Federal army to the latter point, General Thomas being left behind at Nashville. Breckinridge and Forrest then attempted the siege of the city, while Bragg was manœuvring against Buell. The rebels attacked November 5, but were repulsed.

The largest of the defensive works about Nashville is Fort Negley, named after General James S. Negley, who conducted the defense against Breckinridge. At its right is Fort Morton. Farther south, and connected with the former two, is Fort Confiscation. The Capitol is protected by a strong work, or system of works, called Fort Andrew Johnson. South of the city, and covering the approaches on the Hardin, the Hillsboro, and the Granny White pikes, is Fort Houston. Fort Gillem, on the west, commands the approaches by the river roads. There are strong works also on the north.

After the battle of Franklin, November 30, General Thomas concentrated his army in the defenses south of Nashville. Hood followed, and partially invested the city, his flanks resting on the Cumberland River. Hood chose the most inopportune time for operating against the city. It was the season when the river was full, and our gun-boats could with facility patrol the line of the river.

An attempt was made, however, to blockade the river below Nashville, which was partially successful. Maintaining this blockade they would have been able to cut off Thomas's supply-boats from the lower fleet. As the supply-boat *Magnet* was down the river on the way to the lower fleet, December 3, she was fired upon by a rebel battery on the south bank, seventeen miles below Nashville. She received two shots through her cabin, one of them killing a female colored servant. Captain Fitch ordered down the gun-boats *Carondolet* and *Neosho*, with several tin-clads, to dislodge the battery. These boats failed to discover the rebels, and the *Magnet* was towed back with them. On the 6th the *Neosho* was ordered to convey twenty-three transports down the river. The rebels opened fire upon her from the same battery as before. The fire was severe, and splintered up the temporary wooden cabins. An hour and thirty minutes' fighting having failed to dislodge the rebels the boat withdrew up the river to get in better fighting trim, and, returning, fought the batteries till night, and then proceeded back to Nashville.

On the 15th General Thomas assumed the offensive against Hood. His line from west to east ran thus: Wilson's cavalry, A. J. Smith, Wood, Steedman. Schofield's corps was in reserve. Early in the morning the artillery opened fiercely from all the forts and batteries. Then Steedman advanced and drove in the enemy's right and attacked heavily. This attack was intended merely as a demonstration, while the heaviest blow was hanging over the rebel left and centre. Toward noon Smith and Wood became engaged. Hood held a strong position on the southern approaches to the city. Wood attacked the works on the Granny White pike near the rebel centre, and after considerable resistance carried them, and secured the entire line in his front. Our batteries were moved forward and planted on the commanding positions gained, Smith's corps on Wood's right in the mean time engaging the rebel left. In the afternoon Schofield came in on Smith's right. At the same time the whole line advanced. It was not long before the rebels opposite Wood, Smith, and Schofield began to give way, falling back from hill to hill. This gave us a position between the rebels and the river on their left flank, which was now being rolled up on their centre.



ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND—NASHVILLE AND ITS FORTIFICATIONS.

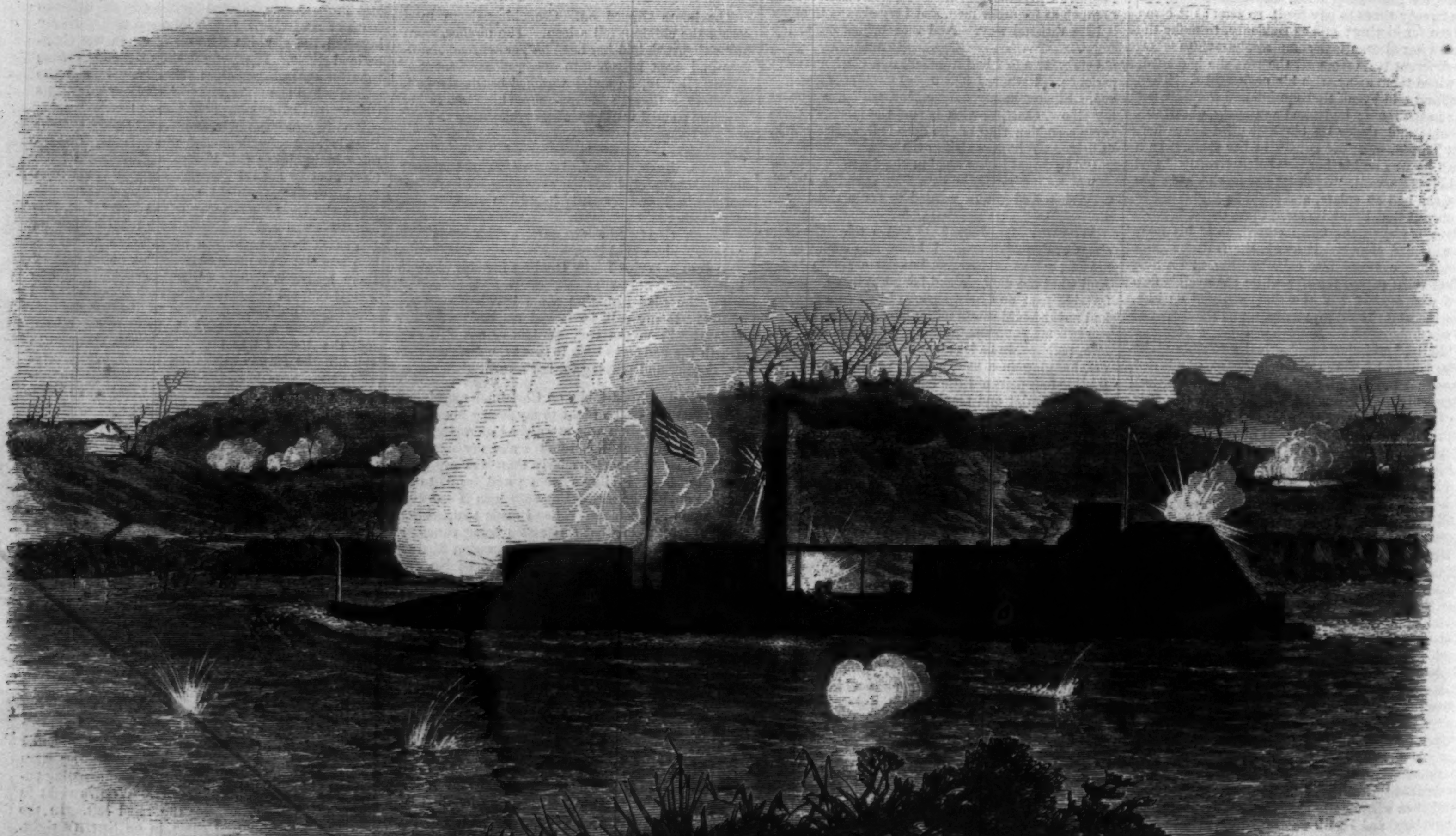
Wilson's cavalry in the mean while advanced until it rested on the hills six miles from Nashville. A new line was formed, and our forces were ready for the attack on this by 5 p.m. The charge was made in the face of a fire which would have been intolerable if the rebels had not fired too high; but when the works were reached their defenders fled in confusion, leaving their cannon and many prisoners behind them. It was now too late to pursue the advantage. The day's work was over, and Thomas had to show for it long lines of intrenchments captured from the enemy, sixteen guns, and over a thousand prisoners.

The next day brought still more glorious results. Wilson's cavalry turned the left of their new line and captured many prisoners. Schofield carried several hills, capturing six guns and many prisoners. Smith carried the salient point of the enemy's line, capturing sixteen guns, two Brigadier-Generals, and about two thousand prisoners. This with one of his divisions: the other—Garrard's—captured the intrenchments in its front, with all the artillery and troops left in them. Wood, next, on the left, took up the assault, carrying intrenchments, with eight guns and six hundred prisoners. In the mean time General R. W. Johnson, in co-operation with the gun-boats, drove the rebels from their batteries below Nashville, capturing a large number of prisoners. All day Hood had been falling back, having during the previous night withdrawn his right and taken up a position covering his line of retreat on Franklin.

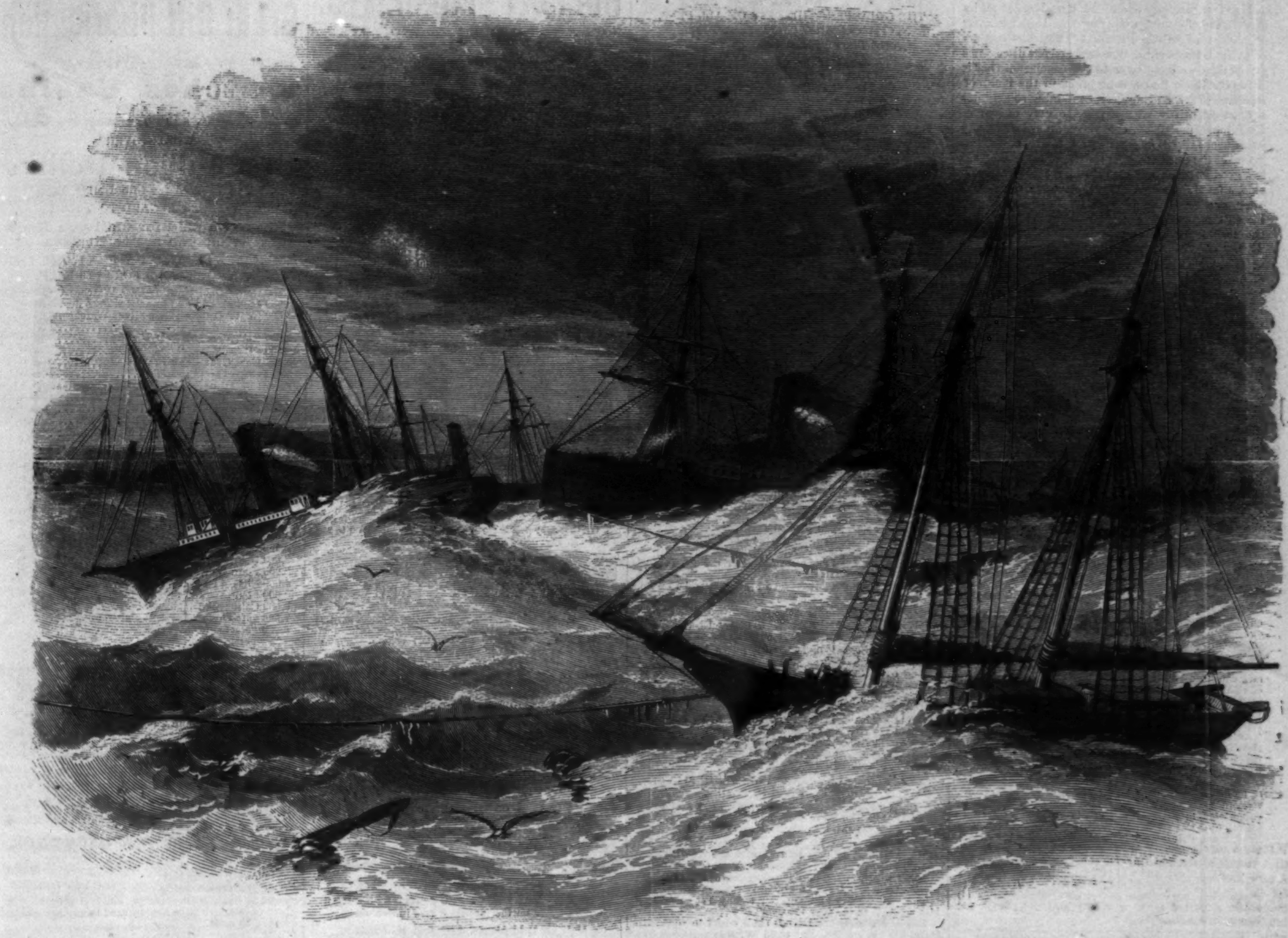
On the 17th Hood was pressed beyond Franklin, where he left behind him 1500 wounded. His front and flanks were infested with perpetual attack. While passing through Franklin Knipe's cavalry division captured five battle-flags and 250 prisoners. Johnson struck his flank beyond Franklin, capturing a large number of prisoners.

PARIS FASHIONS FOR DECEMBER.

A complete revolution seems to have taken place in the modes during the past twelvemonth. Such strange and such curious costumes have rarely been seen in so short an interval, during which ladies perfectly *comme il faut* have alternately, not to say sometimes simultaneously, patronized boots, coats, canes, and casquettes, without, after all, sacrificing any of their personal attractions, which, fortunately, they can not abdicate by any fashion-freak. The latest sign of this closing season of artifice is the open announcement, by the principal



THE UNITED STATES MONITOR "NEOSHO" ENGAGING THREE REBEL BATTERIES ON THE CUMBERLAND, BELOW NASHVILLE, Dec. 6, 1864.—[Sketched by Adam Rohr.]



PORTER'S FLEET LEAVING FORTRESS MONROE.—SKETCHED BY A. R. WAUD.—[SEE PAGE 835.]

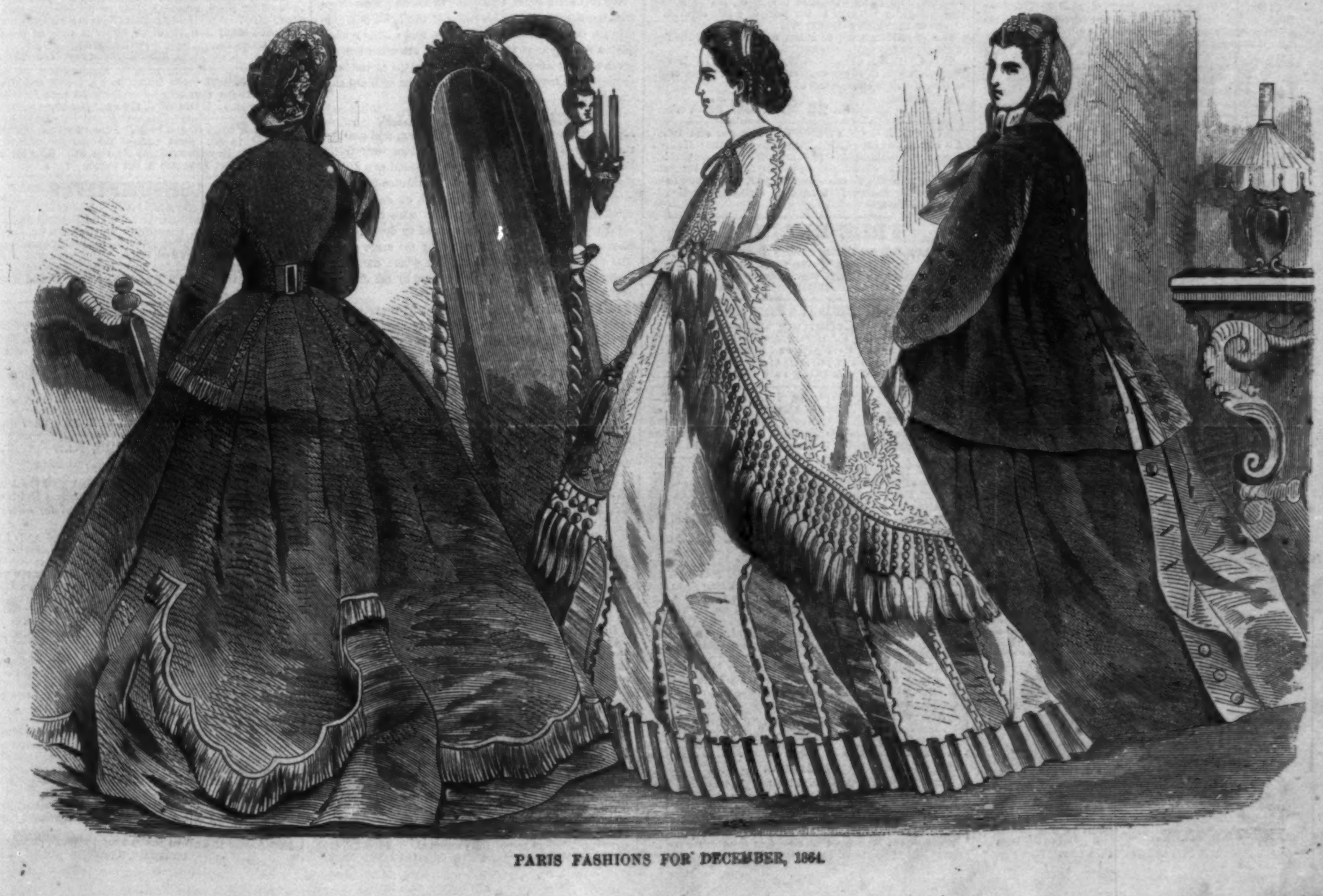
coiffeurs, of ringlets at so much per dozen, for wearing under the bonnet or by the side of a bow!

THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

Fig. 1. *Walking Dress.*—Gray poplin robe, trimmed on the body and skirt with black dentated velvet and long chenille fringe, disposed in the manner shown in our Illustration. The corsage is à basques, and open in front as well as behind. The ceinture, placed underneath, is fastened by two buckles, one in front and the other at the back of the waist. Rose-colored velvet bonnet, ornamented with flowers on one side only; the shellpiece depicted in this Figure forms at the same time the crown and the bavolet.

Fig. 2. *Ball Dress.*—Robe of white tulle over satin skirt ornamented with a deep ruched flounce. The sortie de bal (to which the name of the Harouda has been given) is an ample cashmere rotonde, embroidered with red cashmere representing branches of coral. The trimming round the edge is composed of black and white velvet balls, from which depends a fringe in white yak. The cordelière is a mixture of gold, red, and white, and is also provided with the worsted chainettes and yak fringe.

Fig. 3. *Carriage Dress.*—Brown velvet robe, buttoning behind throughout. The principal feature of this Figure is the Récamier pardessus, in velvet, ornamented with passementerie trimmings. The simplicity of this small pardessus renders further explanation unnecessary.



PARIS FASHIONS FOR DECEMBER, 1864.

A PRODIGY.

HAVING carefully examined, ourselves, in all its details, the charming little new TEN Dollar Sewing Machine (the "little PRODIGY") that has appeared at the horizon of the thousand and one discoveries of the day, we have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to find a conception, in the realm of mechanical art, so complete, combining so singular a practical utility with a price so very moderate. Usefulness, prettiness, cheapness, all are there, and in a quasi Liliputian compass; it is the *multum in parvo* of the ancients. At the eve of the holidays it is a good fortune; and exporters have, also, on their side, a favorable opportunity to save in Europe, Havana, and South America, to the purses willing to loosen their strings, at the advent of the new year, the trouble of fixing their choice.—*Courrier des Etats Unis, Dec.* 13, 1864.

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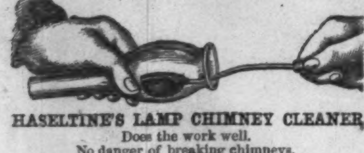

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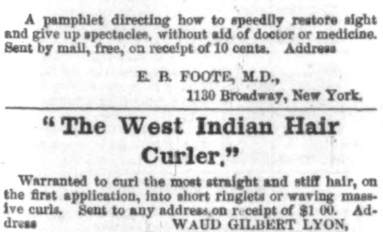

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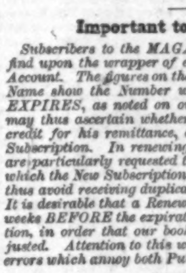

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FOR JANUARY, 1865.

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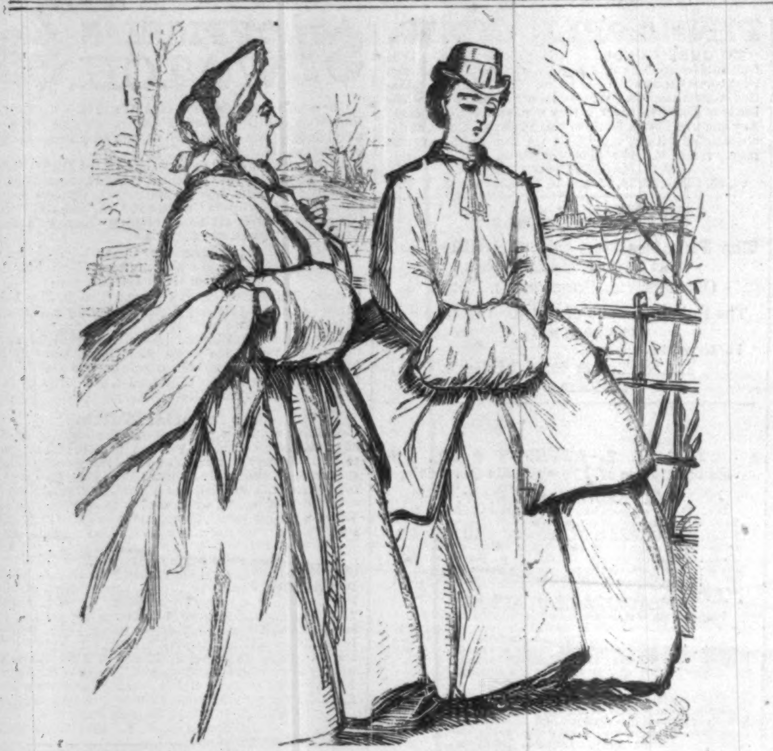

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To STEINWAY & SONS.

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We have at different times expressed our opinion regarding the pianos of various makers, but freely and unhesitatingly pronounce *Messrs. Steinway & Sons' Pianos, both grand and square, incomparably superior to them all.*

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NASSAU, N. P., *November* 1, 1864.

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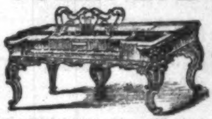

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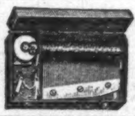

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